





VINDICATION
OF
Divers important *Gospel-Doctrines*,
AND OF
The *Teachers and Professors* of them :
AGAINST
The injurious *Reflections & Misrepresentations*

CONTAINED

In a late printed Discourse of the Rev. Mr. LEMUEL BRIANT'S, Intituled, *The Absurdity and Blasphemy of depreciating Moral Vertue.*

Also a few Remarks are subjoined, on Mr. JOHN BASS'S late *Narrative.*

Published as his dying *Testimony* to the Cause of CHRIST, in the *Protestant Churches*, and particularly in *New-England.*

By SAMUEL NILES,
Pastor of a Church in *Braintree.*

O formosæ Puer, nimium nè crede Colori.
Quid Romæ faciam ? Mentiri nescio.----

Virg.
Juven.

2 Pet. 1. 15, 16. *I will endeavour, that ye may be able after my Decease to have these Things always in Remembrance : For we have not followed cunningly devised Fables, when we made known unto you the Power and Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Chap. 3. 15, 16.--- *Even as our beloved Brother Paul also, according to the Wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you : As also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these Things, in which are some Things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own Destruction.*

B O S T O N :

Printed and Sold by S. KEELEND, opposite the Prison in Queen-Street. 1752.

Thos. G. White

MS. A. 9. 2. 1732

Received of the Honble the
Governor of the Province of
New York the sum of
one hundred and fifty
pounds for the purchase
of the land of the
Indians of the
County of Albany
in the year 1732

JOHN C. MILLER

Witness my hand and seal
this 10th day of June 1732
at New York
J. C. MILLER
Secretary of the Province

By the Honble the Governor
of the Province of New York
J. C. MILLER

T H E

P R E F A C E.

THE *Remarks* contained in the following Pages were, for the Sum and Scope of them, drawn up soon after the Discourse, to which they refer, was published, with an Intent then quickly to offer them to publick View. In doing of which, I had no Design to enter into a personal Contest with the Author, or any others that may be Like-minded with him: but only to *contend for the Faith, delivered to the Saints*, in the Days of the Apostles, and primitive Times of Christianity; which also has been handed down to the Churches of the Saints in *New-England*, by those eminent Worthies, that were Instruments in the Hand of Christ to spread the Knowledge of those important Doctrines revealed and strongly recommended in the Gospel, which have been generally received and professed, not in this Land only, but in all the Churches of the Reformation. However, my Dependance is not upon human Tradition or Antiquity, with Respect to these Doctrines, that are now by some so much decryed and condemn'd, yea, even ridicul'd: But on the pure and unerring *Word of God*; as firmly believing them to be therein discovered, ratify'd and confirmed by Inspiration of the Holy Ghost. — My main Design in the Remarks before us, is, by divine Assistance, (according to my Measure) to vindicate those *Doctrines* of our holy Religion, so misrepresented and treated with so much Contempt in the Discourse under our Examination; and to remove the groundless and injurious Reflections cast on the whole Body of excellent Protestant *Expositors, Ministers, and Professors*, in general, of the last and former Age; and also, if possible, to put a Stop to the prevailing Contagion of *Ar-*

minian Errors and other loose Opinions among us, which threaten to banish vital Piety out of the Land. — Some worthy Gentlemen in the Ministry among us entering into the Controversy, and engaging (as I apprehend) on the Side of Truth, this occasioned my *delaying* to publish my Remarks ; hoping, what was published by them, might lead our Opponent into a laudable Retraction. But my Hopes in that Case soon vanished, upon his publishing a (pretended) *Vindication* of his Sentiments, not so much by fair *Scripture-Argument* (which, I suppose, he found impossible) as by *Banter*, and by *personal* Reflection and Inveective, which doubtless he readily concluded to be much the easiest Method, and perhaps most agreeing to his Genius and Capacity.

The Time of this Delay gave me Opportunity to review what I had wrote, & to exhibit the same to the Publick with considerable *Enlargement* on several Heads of Remark ; by which Means, this Work is much lengthier than I at first purposed : Yet I hope, it may not be the less useful, to such as have not fallen into the *dangerous Scheme* I am opposing, and perhaps may minister some Caution to such as are in Danger to be led away by those *Self-pleasing Notions*, so industriously propagated in this Day of Degeneracy. The Prevalence of sundry pernicious Errors, tending to the Subversion of our holy Religion, is *for a Lamentation*, and *shall be for a Lamentation*, unto all the true Lovers of *Zion*, and Friends to the Churches of Christ in *New-England*. Truly sorrowful is the State of some of our Churches, who have *Ministers* set over them, that contest, and even deny, yea, I may say, deride some of the *grand Articles* of our holy Profession, as they are exhibited in the *Assembly's Catechism* (commonly so called) tho' the Doctrines contested are so plainly according to *Scripture*. Therefore it is, that some (we hope, not many) who have taken on them the *pastoral Charge*, do neglect the *Lambs* of those Flocks under their Care, by declining to instruct them in the private Way, by *Catechising* ; and this in Places where the former Ministers were wont to make Conscience of attending this Work, as a Part of their *ministerial Duty*. —

This

This Practice has obtained not only here in *New-England*, but in all the *reformed Churches* abroad. Unto this laudable; and necessary Practice (as I think it to be) I can give some Evidence. When I resided in this Town of *Braintree* at first, and was at School here, it was the known constant Method of the Rev. Mr. FISK, the then worthy Minister here, to appoint certain Times for the instructing the Children and Youth in the *Catechism*; the Benefit whereof I enjoy'd together with others — And this religious and commendable Service was kept up by those worthy Ministers that succeeded him, the Rev. Mr. MARSH and Mr. HANCOCK. But now, I am informed, it is wholly *laid aside*; which must lie as a Reproach both upon Minister; and People, where it is indulged; as well as must be a dreadful Injury to the Souls of the poor Children, so *shamefully* and *barbarously* neglected. — Some Reasons of my Judgment I shall presently offer. — Another Instance or two I will mention of the like tender *Care & Fidelity* of godly Ministers, to the Souls of the Children and young People under their pastoral Charge. When I was under the Tuition of the Rev. Mr. HOBART of *Newtown*, whose Memory and Character will ever be dear to me, which was when I was more capable of observing & making a Judgment on the Conduct of Ministers, in this Point of *Catechising*; his Method was to appoint a Time for the *Children* to attend this Service; & also for the young People, Males & Females, grown to *Men's* and *Women's* Estate. These, in their several Turns, all attended *Catechising*. Moreover, he was wont to *explain* and *apply* the Doctrines and Duties, held forth in the *Catechism*, at the same Time. — Another Instance of constant and indefatigable Care and Pains in *Catechising*, was my deservedly much honoured Father-in-Law, the Rev. Mr. THACHER of *Milton*; whose Example in this and all other Acts of Piety and Faithfulness, towards not only his own People, but the *Indian* Tribe, both young and old, at *Punkapaug*, and *Packenee*, as they were then called, now *Stoughton*, — I say, his Example, with that of the other venerable Fathers & memorable Brethren above mentioned, and the rest of Christ's Ministers among us,

in general, is certainly worth the Notice & Imitation of their Successors, and of all that sustain the ministerial Character. — Nor wou'd I omit mentioning on this Occasion, the great Service done the World, by that excellent Minister of Jesus Christ, the Rev. Mr. WILLARD, in his elaborate *Exposition* on the *Catechism*: wherein all its Instructions are confirmed by Scripture-Proofs, and with nervous Arguments, sufficient for the Conviction of all Gainsayers.

But now, as my Sentiments in the Case I am upon, are not built on *Tradition*, or the Authority of our Fathers, I shall offer some of the Reasons of my Opinion. I apprehend it very obvious, what *evil Consequences* will necessarily follow the *Omission* of instructing Children, in the *Catechism*. It is well known, that *Catechising* has been of long and singular *Use* among us: the *Advantages* thereof Multitudes are ready from their own Experience to *witness* to. As it has ever been esteem'd by the Ministers in these Churches, a Part of their ministerial Work to *Catechise* the Children of their Congregations, as well as to instruct elder Persons by publicly preaching the Word of God, they have grounded their Judgment partly on that solemn *Charge* our Saviour laid upon *Peter* as a leading Minister, and for a Test of his *Love* to Christ, (Joh. 21. 15.) *Feed my Lambs*. These are a Part of the *Flock*: and it is to be noted, here the *Lambs* are set before the *Sheep*; which might be designed to shew the tender Care Christ had particularly of *Children* and *young People*, who, to answer the Metaphor, must be principally intended by the *Lambs* of the Flock. Agreeable to this is that Charge given to Ministers, and usually laid on them at their Ordination, *Feed the Flock of God which is among you*; the young, as well as old, under your pastoral Care. See 1 *Pet.* 5. 2. Or as it is express't, *Act.* 20. 28. *Take heed unto your selves, and to all the Flock*; of which the *Children* are a great, growing Part, and a *hopeful* Part, when well instructed in the Principles of Religion, by *Catechising*. — We may also see (to the Shame of such as habitually neglect this important Part of their Duty) how emphatically *Christ*, the Head-Shepherd of his Flock, both *Sheep* and *Lambs*, has answered his

his Character and Trust, and left an Example to all his Ministers or Under-Shepherds, in fulfilling so exactly in his personal Ministry on Earth, and leaving the same in Charge to his Ministers, what was predicted of old by the Prophet concerning him, *Isai. 40. 11. He shall feed his Flock, like a Shepherd: He shall gather the Lambs with his Arm, and carry them in his Bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.*

Ministers, Parents, or Tutors neglecting this Branch of their Duty is an inexpressible *Injury* to the Souls of the *Youth* thus neglected, *That the Soul be without Knowledge, it is not good.* And what better Expedient can be found, to promote the good Knowledge of God, in the Minds of young Ones, than the Means I am pleading for? How otherwise can the *Lambs* be said to feed after their Manner? (*Isai. 5. 17.*) Or, the *Kids* be said in a Scripture-Sense to feed beside the *Shepherds Tents*? (*Cant. 1. 8.*) Or can any suppose, that the Knowledge *Timothy* had of the *Holy Scriptures*, consisted only in a meer literal Knowledge, by the bare reading of them? and not rather, that he had been well instructed from his *Childhood*, in the *Contents* of the Bible, especially the great *Truths* contained in the *Holy Scriptures*; and that those Doctrines were received by him and rested on by Faith? Otherwise they cou'd not have had such an happy Effect on him, as to make him wise unto Salvation. The Knowledge *Timothy* had in the holy Scriptures, we may justly conclude, was through the pious Care of his Parents, his Grand-mother *Lois*, and his Mother *Eunice* (2 *Epist. 1. 5.*) who are set as Examples, of carefully instructing Children in Religion.

Moreover, an Omission of this Duty towards Children, will necessarily and by inevitable Consequence, not only be a Means to rase the Foundations of *Zion*, but tend to banish true Religion, and bring in *Heathenism* like a mighty Flood upon a People. For, it is beyond all Contradiction, I suppose, generally speaking, that many Parents, and such as are charged with the Education of Children, are too remiss and negligent in teaching them the Knowledge of the Scriptures, and promoting them in learning their

Catechism, for their early Acquaintance with the *Things of God* and the Religion of *Jesus* : And what a wonderful gratifying *Indulgence* must it be to such Parents and others, when their *Minister* tells them (practically at least, if not verbally) that the *Catechism* is corrupt, containing false Points of Doctrine (as some in this evil Day pretend) and that he *dare not teach the Children what he himself does not believe* : Or else excuses himself from *Catechising* them, by a more plausible Pretence, *That it is no Part of a Minister's Work* !—These and such like Evasions in Ministers, bear a near Resemblance with *Jeroboam's* carnal Policy to secure his Authority over the People ; of whom it is said—*Who sinned & made Israel to sin*.—Such Ministers are in danger of the like Character with his, who is also said to *drive Israel to Sin, and from following the Lord*. (2 Kin. 17. 21.) He perswades them, that it was *too far for them to go up to Jerusalem, to worship* after the Manner which God had appointed : therefore sets up *Golden Calves*, under a corrupt Pretence, that *these were the Gods that brought them out of the Land of Egypt* ; and so drew the Body of that People into Idolatry, which probably he learnt in *Egypt*, when he fled thither for fear of *Solomon*. And this their Idolatry continued until God sent them into Captivity, for their Apostacy, in casting off and forsaking the true Worship he had appointed, and setting up a Religion of their own.—The Example of *Abraham*, and the high Encomium God gives of him and his Conduct, respecting the Case I am upon, is worthy the Imitation of Parents, Ministers, and all others, to whom the Education of Children or Instruction of Youth is committed. See Gen. 18. 19. *I know him, that he will command his Children and his Household after him, and they shall keep the Way of the Lord*. Parents should train up their Children in the *Way of Truth*, if they wou'd not have them depart from it when they are old. (Prov. 22. 6.) They should labour to bring them up in the *Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*. (Eph. 6. 4.) But how can Parents do thus, if by the Instigation of their Minister, by his Example, or by any other Means, they are led to neglect teaching their Children the very first Principles of
the

the Oracles of God ? Which are in an excellent Order and a clear compendious Manner exhibited in the *Catechism*, that has been mostly in Use among us, and highest in Esteem with the generality of Churches in *New-England*. Alas, what we read in *Lam. 4. 3, 4.* I think is applicable in the Case before us ; *Even the Sea-Monsters draw out the Breast, they give suck to their young Ones : the Daughter of my People is become cruel, like the Ostriches in the Wilderness. — The young Children ask Bread, and no Man breaketh it unto them.* — This seems to be the lamentable Case with poor Children, when the *Catechism* is thrown out of its wonted commendable and necessary Improvement for Soul-advantage to Children. And what can be expected to follow, but *Vice, Ignorance & Atheism ?* — Thus Parents entail their Sin on their miserable Offspring : and give them Example, to do the like to their Children. (*Ezek. 16. 44.*)

Before I dismiss this Point, I shall make one brief Observation upon it, which I suppose few will deny to be just : — Had this Neglect of *Catechising* the Children been proved upon any *Minister* in these Churches, though under any Pretences whatsoever, before our venerable Fathers in the Ministry of the last Age, or their Predecessors, in *New-England*, when convened in Council, they would have thought it necessary immediately to dismiss such Minister from his Pastoral Office : And supposing the Church he was set over, should refuse to concur with their Determinations in this Case, I believe, then such a Church wou'd be deem'd unworthy of Communion with the other Churches, as having in Effect denied the Faith, and made themselves accessary to the promoting of such *Ignorance & Error*, as I think to be inconsistent with and destructive of that vital Religion, for which our Ancestors were famous, and this People were once greatly renown'd. Certainly such an Omission must be judged by all sober and well Principled Persons, not only *irreligious* in Ministers, & Parents, but even *inhuman* and *barbarous*, to the Souls of their Children ! Who can account for it ! How can it be excused ! I truly think, Ministers, or Parents, or others that have the Care of

of educating Youth, if they habitually don't practise this Duty of *Catechising*, have *no Cloke for their Sin*. Neither can we rationally expect better Times, without a Reformation in this Matter.--- I shall only add one Word further upon it, *viz.* If the *Minister* in any Place will not be persuaded to attend his Duty in this Point, *Heads of Families* will do well to take the more Pains in *catechising* their Children and Servants at Home ; and in doing it, to make frequent Use of some familiar *Exposition* of the *Catechism*, for the safer and clearer explaining Things to them, as they go along. There are many Books of this Kind to be had ; which might be of singular Service, if made more Use of, to spread the *Knowledge* of divine Things, among elder People, as well as young ones, and to secure them in the *Belief of the Truth*. For, if by such Helps they become well acquainted with the great Doctrines and Duties of Christianity, as they will the better understand the Sermons of their Minister on these Subjects, so they will be the more capable of distinguishing between *Truth & Error* ; and if they should sometimes hear any Thing advanced in Discourses from the Pulpit, *contrary to sound Doctrine*, or leading to *dangerous Errors*, the well-instructed Youth would be less exposed to receive *ill Impressions* therefrom, or at least their more judicious and faithful *Parents* would be able to fortify and guard them, and I hope would take Care to do it seasonably and effectually, as knowing that they (as well as the Minister) must give Account.

It may not be altogether impertinent or unseasonable, if I now take Occasion to mention it as another dark Omen, and a Symptom of the declining State of Religion in this Land, that our wonted *Lectures* on Week-days are of late so much laid aside, or neglected, and practically despised among us. In some Places, perhaps the *Minister* may voluntarily omit them, either by Reason of his *Support's* being too scanty to allow of the Expence usually arising on such Occasions, or because the Burden of *Labour* created hereby takes him too much off from other (as he thinks) more necessary Parts of his Ministry, or else because he is discouraged by the thin Appearance of *Auditors*, &c.

And

And undoubtedly the *People* are very much to Blame. For even where the Minister is not at all in Fault, but resolutely surmounting all Difficulties in his Way, as being chearfully willing to *spend* and be *spent* in the Cause of Christ and for the Good of Souls, diligently keeps up his stated *Lecture*, yet how frequently do's he see it *poorly attended*, and finds herein a great Discouragement to his Labours, as it seems a practical Contempt of the Means of Grace, and an Argument of a sad Prevalence of the Spirit of this World among his People? Indeed it must needs be a Sign of the sorrowful Change of State in Point of visible Godliness thro' the Land, unto all those who are *trembling for the Ark of God*, and who have seen the crouded Assemblies for Worship on *Lecture-days* (as well as on *Lord's-days*) in former Times, now to see the Degeneracy this People are fallen into, by the general Neglect of such Opportunities for the Exercises of Religion and the Care of their Souls. Which Neglect shamefully prevails, not only in many Country-Towns, but even in our *Metropolis* also, the chief Place of Concourse; where tho' in a Judgment of Charity there be some Thousands of devout Souls, yet it was surprizing to me to behold (as I lately did) at their *Thursday-Lecture*, the Pews and Seats in a Manner empty; and this, notwithstanding some Pains have lately been taken (as I am informed) to revive that ancient *Lecture*; particularly by reprinting and dispersing an excellent Discourse of the memorable and Rev. Mr. JOSHUA MOODEY's on *the choice Benefit of Communion with God in his House*; thought to be very well calculated to that Purpose, and accompanied with a recommendatory *Preface*, by sundry Reverend and worthy Ministers of *Boston*, viz. Dr. Sewall, Mr. Prince, and the late Mr. Webb. Whose pathetick Wishes therein expressed, it is not unseasonable here to repeat, in their own Words, which are these. "May the Ministers
 " of Christ be intreated to do their utmost to revive our
 " *first Love* for the House of God, by insisting on the
 " *great Truths of the GOSPEL*; such are, the Doctrines of the
 " *Divinity* and saving *Offices* of our Lord JESUS, God-Man
 " *Mediator*; concerning the *Godhead* and divine *Operations*
 " of

“ of the HOLY SPIRIT, on which all the Success of the
 “ Gospel-Ministry depends : Such are, the Doctrines of
 “ *Original Sin*, and our lost and perishing State by the
 “ Fall ; the Nature and Necessity of *Regeneration* by the
 “ Spirit of God ; our *Justification* thro’ the perfect Righteousness of Christ *imputed* to us, and received by *Faith* ;
 “ the Nature and great Importance of *Gospel-Obedience*, &c.
 “ And may God’s *People* shew their earnest Concern in
 “ this Matter, by a diligent constant Attendance on the
 “ Word and Ordinances, and by their Care to bear the
 “ Fruits of the Kingdom.” —

On this Occasion, I would take the Liberty (which, I hope, I may do without Offence) humbly to suggest, that as there is a *Charity-Lecture*, annually at the Ministers Convention on the Day after the General Election, one View of which is to promote the *Collection* then expected, for the Support of some Ministers that have a difficult Situation, but small Congregations and so but small Salaries, if our honoured Patriots at the *Council-Board* and in the House of *Representatives*, taking the Case into Consideration, would be pleased, as many of them as might be, to countenance so useful a Charity by attending that *Lecture* in particular, and giving their *Contribution*, as several Members of that honourable Body and others of distinguish’d Character, I know, have sometimes done, and therein have not a little honoured themselves, this doubtless would be a *Sacrifice well pleasing to God thro’ Jesus Christ* ; and such a laudable *Pattern* in our civil Leaders and principal Gentlemen might happily be the Means of diffusing a Spirit of Liberality, and draw in many to imitate them, in *honouring the Lord with their Substance* on such Occasions ; which would be Matter of *abundant Thanksgivings to God*, especially from those who receive these yearly Benefactions. — I hope, it will be excused, if I take the Freedom to add here, that a *Concio ad Clerum* being partly the Design of this annual *Lecture*, I trust, it will from Time to Time be the Care of the *Minister* who preaches it, to *exemplify and recommend* on that Occasion the *evangelical Preacher*, and lay hold of that Opportunity for bearing his faithful Testimony,

timony, as in Behalf of the peculiar Doctrines and Duties of *Christianity*, which should chiefly fill our Pulpit-Discourses, so likewise against the growing Errors, Neglects, and Miscarriages of the Day, whether among Ministers or People.

But to return to the special Business of this Preface—

As the Growth of *Arminianism* and loose Principles in Religion among us, tends to the utter Ruin of these Churches, in Point of Faith, Worship, and vital Godliness, I have for my own Part determined, while Opportunity continues, to *testify the Gospel of the Grace of God*, according to the Ability which God giveth. And as I tho't Mr. BRIANT's published Discourse manifestly level'd against some important Doctrines of the Gospel, and calculated to promote *Error*, to depreciate the sound Principles commonly received in the Churches of *New-England*, and among *Protestants* in general, and to reflect Disgrace on those that profess the same; I have been moved (however unfit for such a Task) to undertake an *Examination* of his Discourse, and to endeavour (after my Measure) the *Defence of the Gospel*, and herewith a Vindication of the many *Expositors* and *Professors* reflected upon by him with so much Severity and Acrimony.

If in the Course of my Remarks it should happen, that I have taken Things any where *otherwise* than he intended, it is what I am not sensible of at present. If he should make such an Objection, all I can now say to it, is, That to prevent Misunderstanding he should have forbore all ambiguous Expressions, and ought to have explained his Meaning better. I have taken Things as they stand in his Book, and am not at all conscious of wilfully perverting his Sense.— If he is able to offer me better *Light* from *Scripture*, on any Argument before us, I am ready to receive the same. But *Satyr* or *Banter*, *sophistical Cavils*, or *evasive Replies*, won't be worth my minding: And as for *personal Reflections*, *Insults*, and *Abuses* so familiar with him, I shall not value them a Rush.—

I see by his Management of the Dispute with Mr. PORTER, that when he can't fairly grapple with an Argument, he knows how to shuffle and *evade*: And knows how to

satyrise

satyrise and *reflect*, when he can no longer reason in any plausible Manner. And tho' at first he sat out with some specious Pretension of being a *Calvinist*; yet it seems, he has thought fit to drop it: And some think, after all his loud Noise, he has given up the *Text* it self, which he pretended to vindicate.—But perhaps I go too far, in touching on that Controversy. Yet I had tho't it not improper for me to make some Remonstrances here against the many abusive Reflections, of a *personal* Aspect, which he has filled his published *Letters* with. However, because I would not unreasonably swell this Preface, and because the worthy Gentlemen against whom he writes, are well able, if they think it worth while, to defend themselves, I forbear.—Only I can't help taking Notice of a Paragraph in his *second Letter*, where he deals in Scandal at a strange Rate; not only aspersing the Character of the Living, but even throwing Dirt upon the Memory of the *Dead*. I think it truly a *Master-Piece* of Defamation, as black & deformed as almost ever I met with: And this, it seems, in Retaliation for a comparatively soft Reflection; which, however, had perhaps better have been omitted.—*Perit judicium, cum Res transit in Affectum*.—But I dismiss the disagreeable Subject; hoping, this Author, upon a calm Review of Things, will take Shame to himself for so unaccountable a Sally of vindictive Passion.

I shall only further observe, that what seems to have especially *provoked* him against his Opponents, is their being instrumental to bring him under the Repute of an *Arminian* or *worse*, to the Publick. And all I shall say to this, is, That had not his *printed Discourse* previously laid him under such a Character, the Rev. Gentlemen he so loudly complains of, would (I confess) have acted an unkind Part towards him: But as the Case really stood, I think his Offence groundless, and his Heat on this Occasion altogether unjustifiable. For he is *himself* the true (exemplifying) *Author* of this his Character, by his said *Discourse*; as he has therein disavow'd the orthodox commonly received Notions, on the Head of the Divine Decrees, of *Original Sin*, of *efficacious Grace*, of *imputed Righteousness*, &c.

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To all which he discovers a strange Antipathy ; and at the same Time, makes the *whole Doctrine of Christ* but a more *refined System of Morality*, and resolves the whole Duty of Man into the Practice of *moral Vertue* ; declaring this to be the *Basis and whole Superstructure* of the Religion of JESUS, the very *Sum and Substance* of Christianity ; affirming, that *Revelation* every where suspends our *whole Happiness* on our *personal good Behaviour*, and constitutes this the *Condition of all God's Favours* ; yea, that the *grand Design* of Christ's coming into the World was to be a *Preacher of Righteousness*, to *set up the Christian Scheme*, and *propagate Truth and Vertue among Mankind* ; that to promote moral Righteousness is the *ultimate View* of God in all his Dispensations ; that moral Vertue is the *supreme Dignity of God himself*, the *chief* (if not only) Subject of proper *Gospel-Preaching*, &c. And in short, that by the *commonly received Principles*, so inconsistent with his, the Christian Religion is in many Places turned into an *idle Speculation*, a *mysterious Faith*, a *senseless Superstition*, & a *groundless Recumbency*.— This is a true *Breviate* of his Discourse ; and if his other Discourses from the Pulpit are analogous to this, or consistent with it, What other Denomination can such a Preacher expect to come under, among sober and judicious Christians, but that of an *Arminian* or *worse* ? Certainly then he had no just Reason to reflect, as he has done, on Mr. *Porter*, or his *Attestators*. These Rev. Gentlemen's Testimony in that Case I think truly worthy of Imitation, as well as Commendation, by the faithful Ministers of CHRIST thro' the Land, and all others who have at Heart Soundness of Doctrine and Purity of Religion : Especially as these *Churches* appear now, more than ever, in Danger of being corrupted by *Arminian Errors*, or *worse*, so industriously propagated by several, with the Author we have in View, lately introduced into the Pastoral Charge. One flagrant Instance I can't help taking a particular Notice of ; I mean, Mr. *John Bass*, who was not many Years ago settled in the Ministry, but has lately been dismiss'd, as having turned from *Calvinism*, & embraced the *Arminian Scheme*, by his own Account in his *Narrative of the Affair*. And I can-

not help wishing, that every one of our *Churches*, which have been imposed upon by like Pretenders to Orthodoxy, would follow the laudable Example of the People of *Ashford*; & regularly labour to get free from the dangerous Contagion of a corrupt Ministry, such as disseminates *Arminian* Errors, and loose Opinions in Religion, that tend to subvert the Truth, and destroy vital Christianity among us. Nor can I forbear expressing my Wishes, that in the *Choice* and the *Ordination* of Ministers for the future, *more Care* might be taken, by all concerned therein, to have sufficient Evidence of their being *sound in the Faith*, and hopefully such as will bring the *everlasting Gospel* to their People; and not such as under Pretence of doing that, will only or mainly preach up *moral Vertue*, and this in such a Way as tends to *destroy the Faith* and vacate *the Gospel of Salvation*.

I hope, what I have here offered to the Publick may by the Blessing of God serve some valuable Ends; if not to convince & reduce such as are already engaged in the *Arminian* Scheme, yet to warn others of the Error and Danger of it, and to establish them in the Belief of the Truth, as it is in *Jesus*. I send forth this Essay with my hearty Prayers to the God of all Grace, that for Christ's sake he would own and bless what is here said agreeable to his Mind and Will, for those happy Purposes: And that the Lord in Mercy would help his Ministers, like *Paul*, to *fight the good Fight*, and *keep the Faith*; and help his Churches in this Land, even unto the latest Generations, to *hold fast the Form of sound Words, in Faith and Love, which is in Christ Jesus, to keep his Word and not deny his Name*, but to *hold fast that which they have, that no Man take their Crown from them*.

And may I, who having obtained Help of God, do continue unto this Day (being in the 78th Year of my Age) *obtain Mercy to be faithful even unto the Death, and then finish my Course with Joy*,--- and with the more Joy from a Prospect of this People's *walking in the Truth and continuing in the Grace of God*.

Now unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, be *Glory in the Church* by CHRIST JESUS, throughout all Ages, World without End. Amen.

Braintree, Sept.

25th 1751.

SAMUEL NILES.

E R R A T A.

P. Age. 2. l. 1. read, *Gospel-Truth* p. 16. l. 23. r. and this p. 31. l. 18. r. calling p. 33, l. 18. r. 1. I shall p. 41. l. 5. r. Action;— ibid. l. 24. r. According to what p. 42. l. 2. r. Interpretation p. 63. l. 29 r. Inconsistency p. 80. l. 15. r. might pertinently p. 89. l. 4. r. Another p. 95. Marg. l. 4. r. Doctrines; professed p. 110. l. 20. r. can there ---

A

VINDICATION

Of divers important *Gospel-Doctrines*, with the *Preachers* and *Professors* of them ; Effayed in the Way of *Remarks* upon a Discourse (delivered Sermon-wise, and published, on ISAIAH 64. 6.) Intitled, *The Absurdity and Blasphemy of depreciating moral Vertue.*

THIS is a memorable Observation, which some of our venerable Fathers in *New-England* once made by Way of Lamentation, very applicable to the present Day ; viz. “ It “ was one of the Songs (as the *Jewish Masters* “ tell us) in the Feast of Tabernacles, — *Blessed be our* “ *Youth, which have not made our old Men ashamed.* “ But alas ! we that are *old Men*, must confess ourselves “ *ashamed*, when we see how our *Youth* have expressed and “ behaved themselves ; and with what Scoffs they have “ assaulted the Order of the Gospel, in some Things lately “ published & scattered about the Country.” Now if in their Day *Scoffers* being found assaulting the Order of the Gospel was to them Matter of Lamentation, how much more lamentable is it, that there are to be found in our Day *Scoffers* among our *Youths*, scoffing at and assaulting even the *Doctrines of the Gospel*, and some of the most

B

important

important Points of Gospel-Truths, treating them with Ridicule, in Discourses printed and scattered about the Country ! I am sorry to say it, I think we have a flagrant Instance in the Discourse (not to say *Sermon*) now to come under our Examination : Where it is very obvious, sundry great Doctrines of the Gospel are exploded and hissed at, the Characters of eminent Men, who have espoused them, are aspersed and contemptuously treated, and as I apprehend, some dangerous Errors asserted, in such a confident Manner, as if we were to be insulted or flouted out of our religious Principles ; — as if truly these Churches in *New-England* had from the Beginning been settled on a wrong Bottom (so have their Religion still to seek) and as if this our *Author* must be the very Man to open our Eyes and illuminate the Country ! Indeed if this Gentleman, or any others, were capable of giving us *better Light* into divine Truths upon Scripture-Authority, I hope none of us would appear so prejudiced in Favour of our own private Sentiments, or of the commonly received Opinions in Religion, as to shut our Eyes against it, or wilfully reject it : But I must freely say, I have little Expectation of *that*, from One whose first Attempt seems calculated to *darken Counsel by Words without true Knowledge*, and scatter Darkness rather than Light ; and tends to obscure, yea even to subvert the Gospel, rather than to establish and explain it ; particularly in regard that the main and most essential *End* of Christ's coming into the World, *viz. to make Expiation for Sin*, and *bring in everlasting Righteousness*, is in Effect denied, by an abusive Representation of the grand Design of Christ's mediatorial Undertaking ; as will be seen in its proper Place, in the Course of these Remarks.

It is not without much Reluctance I have engaged in this Affair, having waited some Time in hopes to hear of its being undertaken by some better Hand : but none appearing (that I was apprized of, 'till I had almost finished what I at first intended) to plead the Cause of Christ publicly against what carries a threatening Aspect, if suffered

to pass without Controul ; therefore with a View to serve the Interest of Christianity in these Churches, and particularly in the Society under my more immediate pastoral Care, by guarding it against the Infection of wild and dangerous Tenets, brought so near our Doors, I have thought it my Duty, to set upon a faithful Examination of the *Author's* Performance referred to. — In doing of which, depending upon divine Grace thro' *Christ* for Direction and Help, I have resolved to *contend earnestly*, tho' withal I hope scripturally, *for the Faith once delivered to the Saints* ; even that Faith, which the Churches of the Saints in NEW-ENGLAND have been in the Possession and Profession of, now to the third Generation down from our renowned Ancestors, whom Christ in a distinguishing Manner honoured and made to be the happy Instruments of peopling this Wilderness, of settling Churches here in the true Faith and Order of the Gospel, and in Christian Fellowship together, and of erecting a College, when weak and in an Infant-State, for the educating of Youth in sound Principles and good Literature ; that by the Smiles of Heaven on their Endeavours, there might come forth a Succession of learned and godly Ministers, furnished and disposed to feed and lead the Generations rising up after them in the Ways of Truth, both in Doctrine and Worship, in Discipline and in Manners. — And shall we their Posterity, after all the Goodness of God so remarkably experienced for a Series of near a Century and half, give up that Cause, which is not so much our own as it is Christ's ? — Surely, if it be given up, whether by Indolency or Treachery, we shall in that Case be justly look'd upon by the Eye of a jealous God, as shamefully *degenerated*, however *noble and right a Seed* we sprang from. — To prevent so dreadful a Consequence, I would contribute my best Endeavours ; particularly in the present Essay, by way of Remarks (as before hinted) on the Discourse now in View.

- In the Prosecution of which Purpose, I shall —

1. Consider the Words of the *Text*, as they stand connected with the *Context*; and likewise compare them with *parallel* Passages of Scripture, both in the old Testament and New.

2. Attempt to remove the *Prejudices* our Author would raise against many sound Protestant *Expositors* and others, by his harsh and unbecoming *personal* Reflections upon them, and by his abusive Representations of their *Principles*, which I shall say something in Vindication of, as it falls in my Way.

3. Shew the *Danger* of substituting or setting up a Righteousness of *our own* in the Room or Stead of *Christ's* Righteousness;—and consider how far our *Author* is doctrinally faulty, on this Head, in his Discourse.

4. Enquire whether there is not more of *Absurdity* and *Blasphemy* couched in disowning some of the main *Ends* of CHRIST's coming into the World, than can be in the pretended Depreciation of *moral Virtue*.

5. Consider whether the severe *Reflections* on the Religion of *others*, insinuated by this Author (particularly in Pages 7th & 8th of his Discourse) are not very justly applicable to *his own* Religion, as exhibited therein to the World: And also whether the *Objections* raised in the Close of that Discourse, which he has framed and pretended to answer, do not appear a *true* and *ample Description* of the whole of his Performance, notwithstanding all his laboured Solutions.

I. I am to consider the Words of his *Text*, particularly as they lie in Connection with the *Context*;—and to compare them with some *parallel* Passages in Scripture.

Here, to be distinct,

(1.) I shall consider the *Words themselves*, and view them in their Relation to the *Context*; withal taking some Notice of what our Author has advanced in the Discourse before us.

The Text is that Clause in ISAIAH 64. 6. — *All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags*.—Our Author, after running thro' more than four Pages by Way of Introduction (on

(on several Passages of which I shall take Occasion to make some Remarks, as they may properly fall in under one or other of the Heads propos'd to Consideration) at length comes to his *Text* ; which I shall first give you *his* Construction of in his own Words, with some Remarks upon it ; and then offer *my* Sentiments upon it, back'd with some Arguments, both from Reason and Revelation.

Our Author having made a long Harangue upon Premises something foreign to the Purpose, at last recollects himself, and returns after a tedious Digression, to his Subject ; beginning thus (*Page 9.*) “ And [not to forget my “ *Text.*]” — which peradventure he might have done for the whole Hour, and yet carried on his Discourse with near as much Pertinence, and Propriety, as it now appears with. — However, let him go on in his own Way. —

He adds, “ No Passage perhaps in the whole Book of “ God has been more *shamefully perverted*, than this I “ have now chosen to discourse upon : The Words, as “ they are *commonly received*, are a standing *Reflection* on “ all *Virtue* and *good Manners* ; the most effectual *Dis- “ couragement* that could be given to the Practice of “ *Christian Morality*, and consequently one of the most “ *fatal Snares* that could be laid for the Souls of Men.”

A wonderful Flight ! — On which I observe, our Author's Design (it seems) being to enlighten the Christian World, and to correct and reform our vulgar Expositors & Preachers, might judge artfully enough, in beginning his Attempt thus, with such *swelling Words of Vanity*, and of *Reproach* upon “ the Words of his Text as they are *commonly received.*” — And surely, if the Case be as he represents it, it can't be a *venial* Crime in any, after such fair Warning from our Author, to presume ever again to apply the Words as they are “ *commonly received.*”

Now he tells us, — “ The *common Notion* of them is, “ that the Prophet is here giving a just and literal De- “ scription of the *Righteousness* of the *Best* ; while he is “ only confessing and lamenting the aggravated *Sins* of

“*the worst of Men.*”—This his Representation of the Case seems exceptionable enough in both its Parts, as to the Manner of Expression at least : however, I shall not stand to criticize upon Language, or be nice about Words. He further amplifies in stating the *Notion commonly received* : But miserably misses it, when he says, “*The best Righteousness has been generally spoken of, as no better a Qualification,—than filthy Rags.*” — As I shall have Occasion to shew afterwards.

He comes at last (P. 10.) to give us *his* Judgment concerning the genuine meaning of the *Text* ; — And with the highest Assurance tells us how it is to be understood ; designing, it seems, to prevent Expositors and others, for the future, from so “*shamefully perverting*” this Passage of Scripture ; and that *the Words, as they are commonly received,*” may no longer be “*a standing Reflection on all Virtue and good Manners,*” or “*such a fatal Snare to the Souls of Men.*”— Thus he declares himself — “*The true Sense of the Words (as I trust will appear in the Progress of this Discourse) is not, that their Righteousness would have been as filthy Rags, if they had really been a righteous People (the sacred Writer suggests no such thing) — It must therefore be a Matter of great Importance, a Design richly worth our Undertaking, to deliver the Text from this false Gloss, this horrid Abuse that has been put upon it.*” —

But I doubt, our Author has sadly missed his Aim, — and instead of *delivering his Text from a false Gloss, and horrid Abuse,* has indeed rather put one upon it himself : as, I am persuaded, will appear in the Sequel of these Remarks. — Whereas this Gentleman has taken Pains to blacken the Character of the *Jews*, and set it in the most odious Light ; I think this injuriously done, and but very little to the Purpose. — That the Jewish Nation, at the Time of *Isaiab’s* Prophecy, had too generally fallen into a State of woful Degeneracy, I confess, is sufficiently evident from Scripture : But that they were so universally abandoned to such a Degree of *Immorality and Wickedness,*

as they are represented by our Author, I believe wants Proof; and so does his Assertion, that “if they had really been a righteous People, their Righteousness would not have been as filthy Rags, — and that the sacred Writer suggests no such Thing.” With as much of an Air of Infallibility as this Gentleman here delivers his Opinion, it may possibly before we have done with him, appear; he is under a very gross Mistake; and the Charge of putting a “false Gloss and horrid Abuse on the Text,” returns on his own Head.

The Decision of this Case is of great, and (as it appears to me) of the last Importance. In order therefore to discover, on which Side of the Question the Truth lies, I shall proceed, as was proposed, to offer some Thoughts on the Text, and shall soberly deliver my Opinion in the Case, submitting the same to the Correction of Men of better Judgment, than either our Author or I, in Modesty can pretend to.

Now that we may come to a clear Understanding of the Words of the Text, — *All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags,* — It may be of use to premise the following Considerations: — Namely,

1. That GOD always had, and ever will have a Church in the World; it were easy to prove this: but I suppose it will not be disputed; therefore I need not labour the Point.

2 That the Church of God, under all its Vicissitudes and Revolutions, in the several Periods of Time, whether under the Patriarchal, or Mosaical, or Christian Constitution, hath always had in it a Number of true Believers in God and in the Messiah. — Even in the darkest and most degenerate Age, there always has been a Remnant according to the Election of Grace, who were Fellow-Citizens with the Saints and of the Household of God; tho’ sometimes it has been but a small Remnant, and like the Grape-gleanings of the Vintage, as it were one of a City and two of a Tribe: Nevertheless, God, who despises not the Day of small Things, has still owned them for his People, and not for-

faken them.—The Name of the Church ever has been, and ever will be that, *JEHOVAH SHAMMAH, The Lord is there.*—Which is a Consideration, sufficient, I think, to take off the *Odium* cast on the People of the *Jews*, by our Author, when he represents them as being in *Isaiab's* Day the worst of Men, and universally so; or else, he says, their *Righteousnesses* would not have had the *odious Character of filthy Rags* applied to them:—whereas, it is evident, the Confession in this Text is the Church's Confession; and this the *only* Church God had then in the World,—which, as corrupt as the Times may be supposed to have been, yet were called *the holy People, the redeemed of the Lord, a City not forsaken*, *Isai. 62. 12.*—Certainly, there was a Number of precious *Saints of the most High*, then among the *Jews*; and if so, this destroys the Author's Hypothesis concerning that People, that they were at this Time an abandoned People, “utterly destitute of true
 “*Righteousness*, yea, as the worst of Men, given up to
 “the most detestable Immoralities, and that the whole
 “Design of the sacred Writer is to shew that they had no
 “real true *Righteousness*.”——But to proceed, let it be considered,

3. That under the Church's legal and typical Administration, God put his *Prophets*, in the Times of their Propheying, into a *double Capacity* and *Trust*, wherein they were eminent *Types* of the great *Mediator* between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus, who both mediates with God for his People, and with his People for God. Thus were the Prophets appointed to be God's Mouth to his People, *Jer. 15. 19. Thou shalt be my Mouth*; and as such they came to the People in the Name of God, under his Authority, and under a like Promise as that made to *Moses*, *Exod. 4. 12. Go, and I will be with thy Mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.*——They were also the People's Mouth unto God, in a Manner as *Aaron* was Spokes-man to *Moses*, *ibid. 7. 16.*—Now under this publick Character we are to consider the Prophet *Isaiab*, making the Confession in the Text, *All our Righteousnesses*
 are

are as filthy Rags. The Prophet here is the Church's Mouth in Prayer ; or the Church is by the Prophet offering up her Prayer to God in Faith : petitioning for divine Help against her Adversaries.— It is the Church, I say, that makes this Prayer by the Mouth of the Prophet ; and even then the *only* true Church of God, wherein it must in Reason be supposed, there were others besides the Prophet, and perhaps many, sincere in their Addresses to the Throne of Grace for Salvation in a Time of Need : it was the Prayer of the *Upright*, the *Prayer of Faith* ; at least, on the Part of the Prophet and many others. Their Petition is urged and enforced by a variety of Pleas, particularly from the Consideration of what God had already done for his People ; and they proceed, in the lively Actings of Faith, to express their Acquiescence in God's Promises, not only with Regard to what temporal Good he might in Mercy bestow upon them, but also to the inconceivable Glory he had in Store, *prepared for them that wait for him*, (v. 4th of the Context) or as the Apostle expounds it, *prepared for them that love him.* (1 Cor. 2 9) — Then the Church goes on (v. 5.) to a farther Expression of her Faith, with Regard to the Constancy of God's Mercy—*Thou meetest*, or as it may be read, *Thou ownest and acceptest, him that rejoiceth and worketh Righteousness*, i. e. the same as before described, such as *wait for God*, or *love him* ; who delight themselves in the Lord, and delight in keeping his Commandments ; who rejoyce not in Iniquity, but rejoyce in the Truth, and rejoyce in Hope, while through Faith they are enabled to work Righteousness ; who experiencing the Joy of Faith, have Confidence toward God, — *that they shall be saved* ; as the Church speaks in the Close of this 5th Verse. Nevertheless the Church, as became her, makes a humble Confession of her own Unworthiness, (v. 6.) *But we are all as an unclean Thing* — How pertinent, seasonable and fit a Confession was this from the Church, when supplicating for Mercy and Grace to help her, when acknowledging former Mercies, and when acting Faith and Hope in the

Promise

Promise for further Mercies ? On such an Occasion, how meet and becoming was it in the Church and People of God, thus to humble themselves in his Sight, under a Sense of their *Uncleanness* ; and consequently their Unworthiness of the Blessings received or asked at the Hands of a holy God, who knew what sinful Creatures they were ? And I would add, that the purest Church that ever was upon Earth, ought and might with the greatest Propriety, even in her purest Times, since *Adam's Fall*, as an indispensable Duty, confess with Lamentation in the Language of the Church here, *We are all as an unclean Thing*.——Now if the Fountain be *unclean*, no Wonder if the Streams are so too. For *who can bring a clean Thing out of an unclean ? Not one*. — How fitly therefore does the Church, conscious of the Imperfections & Corruptions with which the best of her Performances, whether Ceremonial or Moral, were stained, subjoin this further Confession — *And all our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags !* A Confession, which the purest Church on Earth may make, with Reference to their purest *Righteousnesses*, I think, without incurring the Imputation of *Absurdity and Blasphemy*, in *depreciating moral Virtue*, with which this Author reproaches such a Construction of the Text ; which I think, none dare deny, except it be such as agree with our Author, who seems to place his whole Dependance on *Morality* ; as will more fully appear, I presume, from the most candid Examination of his Discourse refer'd to.

By our *Righteousnesses*, we are to understand *Works of Righteousness which we have done*. The Expression is not to be construed as including that *Righteousness* which is ours by *Imputation*, and is the Righteousness of *Christ* subjectively, described by the Apostle, *The Righteousness which is of God by Faith* : But it means that Righteousness which is ours by *Inherence* ; yet, as One saith, “ It does not mean Righteousness simply considered in the Abstract, but considered in its *Subjects* ; — Creatures morally imperfect, all whose Qualities consequently are

“ so

“ so too : Nor does it mean the *Principle* of Righteousness
 “ as infused into Believers by the Holy Spirit, but the
 “ *Exercise* of it, or Works of Righteousness as done by
 “ us ; and it respects all our own *personal* Acts of Obe-
 “ dience to God’s Commandments, whether respecting
 “ Rituals or Morals,—yea, even Gospel-Duties of Faith
 “ and Repentance, considered as Actions performed by
 “ us.—*All our Righteousnesses*, the Church confesses, *are as*
 “ *filthy Rags*. “ They are so in the Eye of the *Law* and
 “ *Justice of God*, as considered in themselves, separately from
 “ the *Righteousness of Christ*, which through Grace is im-
 “ puted to Believers, and in Vertue of which their sin-
 “ cere (tho’ imperfect) Duties are acceptable to God.”—
All our Righteousnesses, viewed as they really be in them-
 selves, in Point of Conformity to the *Law* of God, are
 very defective, and in regard of intermixing Sins are much
 polluted.—The Church’s Complaint in the preceding
 Words was, *We are all as an unclean Thing* ; — alluding
 possibly to the Cry of the *Leper* under the Ceremonial
 Law, *Unclean, Unclean !* (Lev. 13. 45.) And then they
 further take Shame to themselves, from a Sense of their
 having nothing of their own that did or could *hide* their
 spiritual Nakedness and Uncleaness : Their very *Right-*
eousnesses themselves being all but as *Rags*, yea as *filthy*
Rags. They may be called *Rags*, as they were so defi-
 cient, that they would by no Means serve for a Covering
 to hide the Shame of their spiritual Nakedness and Un-
 cleanness ; scarce so well as the Aprons of Fig-Leaves, that
Adam and *Eve* sewed together, to cover the Shame of
 their bodily Nakedness. And they may be called *filthy*
Rags in this Respect, that if Men essayed to *cover* them-
 selves with *their own Righteousnesses*, as these were so stained
 with Mixtures of Sin, they would rather *increase* their
 spiritual Uncleaness ; at least, the applying them to such
 a Use, and trusting in them for a *Cover* to their Unclean-
 ness, would but so much the more contaminate or pol-
 lute them in the Sight of a holy God, who is always jea-
 lous for the Honour of his *Grace*, and for the Glory of
 the

the Redeemer, in whom only he maketh us accepted, and maketh us beautiful thro' his Comeliness put upon us : For it is written in the Prophet, *By his Knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many.*—And again, *Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I Righteousness and Strength : Even to Him shall Men come—And in the Lord shall all the Seed of Israel be justified and shall glory* — And so the Apostle, *By the Obedience of One shall many be made righteous.*—Even as David also describeth the Blessedness of the Man, to whom God imputeth Righteousness without Works,—saying, *Blessed are they whose Iniquities are forgiven, and whose Sins are covered,* i. e. hid from the Eye of vindictive Justice ;—Not by the poor thin Webb of their own inherent Righteousness, but by the rich Robe of Christ's Righteousness, imputed and received by Faith.—Hence *all our Righteousnesses* may be said to be *as filthy Rags* (a most apt and pertinent Comparison) as it stands in Relation to the grand Affair of our *Justification* before God. Accordingly the Apostle *Paul* teaches us to reject all Pretences to Justification in God's Sight by our *moral Virtues*, or personal Righteousnesses of any Kind ; all which he excludeth from being the Matter or Ground of our Justification, when he represents *every Mouth stopped by what the Law saith, and all the World as become guilty before God* ; and hence draws that Conclusion, *Therefore by the Deeds of the Law there shall no Flesh be justified in his Sight ; for by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin*, Rom. 3. 19, 20. And then to shew us what it is, that is the true Ground or Matter of our Justification, and how it is to be obtained by us, he adds in the next Verses ;—*But now the Righteousness of God without the Law is manifested ; being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets : even the Righteousness of God, which is by Faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe : —being justified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus,—thro' Faith in his Blood.*—Therefore we conclude, that a Man is justified by Faith without the Deeds of the Law. So Chap. 5. 1. —Being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God through
our

our Lord Jesus Christ.—It follows, *vs.* 9. *Much more then being justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath through him.*—And *vs.* 17. *For if by one Man's Offence Death reigned by One, much more they which receive abundance of Grace, and of the Gift of Righteousness, shall reign in Life by One, Jesus Christ.* The plain Scope of the Apostle is to shew, that the whole and sole Matter of our Justification before God, or our only justifying Righteousness in his Sight, is the Righteousness of Christ, graciously given to us in a Way of Imputation, and received by Faith alone. Hence he calls it the the Gift, the Gift by Grace, which is by one Man, — the free Gift unto Justification, even Justification of Life.—Surely, this Justification is wholly of Grace, and not of Works. It's true, we are said to be justified through Faith, which is an operative Principle; but then it is thro' Faith as uniting us to Christ, and receiving the Atonement; not as working Righteousness, and producing good Works, but as receiving the Gift of Righteousness which is by one Man, Christ Jesus. It is by the Obedience of One, that many are made Righteous: It is the Righteousness of One, which is upon all them which believe; and they believe thro' Grace; to them it is given to believe: By Grace ye are saved thro' Faith, and that not of your selves; it is the Gift of God: Not of Works, lest any Man should boast.—So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but of God that sheweth Mercy, and that in his infinite Grace, imputeth Righteousness without Works.—What are our best Works, if tried by the Law, which is holy & just, but such as cannot, shall not profit us, in Regard of Justification before God? Surely in compare with that Righteousness which the Law demands, *All our Righteousnesses are but as filthy Rags.*—They are such in compare with the Righteousness of Christ, who was holy, harmless, undefiled; — his Obedience was perfect and spotless, his Blood pure and untainted with Sin: whereas, Corruption cleaves to us, and to our best Performances; so that *all our Righteousnesses*, compared with Christ's Righteousness, deserve no better Character

rafter than this odious one in the Text.—Nay, in compare with the Righteousness of the *Saints in Glory*, the Righteousnesses of the best Men upon Earth, are but as *filthy Rags*.

This may suffice for the Illustration of the Text. I would now proceed something further, in viewing the *Context*.—That it was the *Church*, and the only one that God had in the World at that Day, which made the humble Confession, we have been considering, may be demonstrated from the repeated Expressions of their *Faith* in God; not only in Passages preceeding the Text, but in several that follow it, *ψ. 8 & 9. But now, O Lord, thou art our Father: we are the Clay, and thou our Potter, and we are all the Work of thy Hand.—Behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy People.*—The Prophet here appears plainly addressing the Throne of Grace with a *Prayer of Faith*, in the Name and Behalf of the *Church* of God: Nor can it be suppos'd in Reason, but that there was a Remnant of *faithful* ones at that Day, if we consider that memorable Instance in the Time of *Elijah*, the Prophet, when the Ten Tribes had revolted to such a Degree, that *he made Intercession to God against Israel*, and complained as if he were *left alone*, in the true Worship and Fear of God: But what said the Answer of God unto him? *I have reserved to my self seven Thousand Men, who have not bowed the Knee to Baal.* (Compare *1 Kin. 19. & Rom. 11.*) Now if there was such a *Remnant* according to the Election of Grace, in that Day of extream Degeneracy in *Israel*, when they had *forsaken God's Covenant*, *thrown down his Altars*, and *killed his Prophets*, insomuch that *Elijah* tho't he was the *only* Man left to serve God; we may reasonably conclude then, That in the Tribe of *Judah*, who had never been so wholly given to Idolatry, but had the Worship of God always in some Degree kept up among them, there was at least a proportionable Number of sincere Worshippers of God still remaining in this Tribe, and in *Isaiah's* Time many such among this People; tho' represented by our Author, as an *abandoned* People,

People, the “*worst of Men, wholly given up to the most detestable Wickedness.*”—But that this is an abusive and injurious Representation, besides what has been already said, I might argue from the *Date of Isaiah's Prophecy*; the latter Part of which (including the disputed Text) being in the Reign of *Hezekiah King of Judah*, a pious Prince and a great Reformer; when the *good Knowledge of the Lord* spread greatly in the Land, and God very signally *revived his Work*, insomuch that divers even of the other Tribes, not included within *Hezekiah's Dominions*, we are told, *humbled themselves*, and came to *Jerusalem* to keep the *Passover*, and to *seek the Lord God of their Fathers*; also in *Judah the Hand of God was to give them one Heart to do the Commandment of the King, and of the Princes by the Word of the Lord.* (2 Chron. 30. 11, 12.)—And tho' in this good King's Reign, *Isaiah* prophesied of the *Babylonian Captivity*, yet we read, *Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, Good is the Word of the Lord which thou hast spoken: He said moreover, For there shall be Peace and Truth in my Days.* (Isaiah 39. 8.)—And the Prophet's next Message, in the following Chapter, begins with Words of Consolation, *Comfort ye, Comfort ye my People, saith the Lord, speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, &c.*

I have insisted the longer on these Things, to shew, That our Author's Discourse was laid on a wrong Foundation; and, I think, has neither Scripture nor Reason to support the Representation therein made of the *Jews*, as a wholly abandoned People, at the Time when *Isaiah* made that Confession in the Text, *All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags*: as also by Consequence to shew, this Character, odious as it is, is justly applicable to the *Righteousnesses* of the very *best of Men*, in the Respects which have been mentioned; since, in some such Respects, even the holy *Prophet*, and godly *Hezekiah*, and others of the *Faithful*, in whose Name he spake, did apply this Character to *their own Righteousnesses*. Upon the whole, I would add,—Was not the Confession in the Text dictated by the *holy Spirit*, and put into the Prophet's Mouth, by di-

vine *Inspiration*, for the *Church's* Use? What Presumption then must it be in any, to find Fault with the Manner of Expression? or with that Construction of it, which supposes it adapted for the *Church's* Use; not excluding the *best* of Men from the Use of it? Would to God, there were found among us, even among us, many more, than its to be feared there are, spirited humbly to make this Confession in the Text; and like the Church on this Occasion, drawn off from Dependence on their *moral Vertues*; and brought to place their whole Confidence in *Christ's Righteousness*: yet, while renouncing their own Righteousness in the Affair of Justification, not at all abating of their *Care to maintain good Works*, but still *diligently following every good Work*, strictly and constantly attending every Duty, whether religious or civil, personal or relative!

(2.) I proceed now to the other Thing proposed under my first general Head of Remarks, which is to produce some *parallel* Texts of Scripture, and compare them with this Passage in the Prophet.— There are similar Passages enough, both in the Old and New-Testament, to prove, that the Church's Confession here has in Effect ever been, and gives us Reason to think it still is and ever will be, the Language of the Church of God, — *All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags*. And therefore that it's not a Confession peculiarly calculated for that *Age* wherein it was indited; nor to be confined to that People of the *Jews* only, as our Author suggests. Indeed I grant, this Confession is not to be found any where else in Scripture, expressed (*totidem verbis*) just in so many Words; but it's sufficient if it be there (*eodem sensu*) implicitly and virtually. It would be almost endless, to cite all the Sayings in the Bible, that carry much the same Sense as this Confession in the Text.— All those Passages may fairly be reduced under this Head, where we find the Saints or Children of God *renouncing their own Righteousness*, as to any Claim founded upon it, when asking divine Benefits; and where we find them resolving all their Hopes into
the

the *Mercy of God* ; where we find them confessing *their Unworthiness*, pleading for *Pardon of Sin*, justifying Providence in *afflictive Dispensations*, magnifying the divine *Grace* towards them in *favourable Events*, deprecating God's entering into a *judicial Process*, &c. — I shall only mention a few out of the many Instances that might be alledg'd, to my Purpose. — Thus, when this very Prophet, the Penman of the Text, said as in *Isai. 6. 5. Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a Man of unclean Lips, and I dwell in the midst of a People of unclean Lips ; for mine Eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts :* What does this Confession import, less than that in the controverted Words, *All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags !* — And what less than this does that of another Prophet amount to, who while he is personating & pleading for the Church, says, as in *Dan. 9. 18. O my God, incline thine Ear, — for we do not present our Supplications before thee for our Righteousnesses, but for thy great Mercies !* Here we see, where the Force of the Church's Argument in the Mouth of the Prophet, lies, when instant in Prayer for divine Relief and Help, in their present Difficulties, — *Not for our Righteousnesses, O our God, but for thy great Mercies, we present our Supplications before thee.* The Sense is plainly this, 'Thou art our Covenant-God, and we pray in Faith and Hope for thy Salvation : yet our only Plea at the Throne of Grace is *thy Mercy*, not *our own Worthiness* ; for we can challenge nothing at thy Hands on the Account of *our own Righteousnesses*, which are even *as filthy Rags*, in the Sight of thine holy and all-seeing Eyes : — We therefore renounce all Dependance upon these for obtaining thy Favour, and rely wholly upon thy Mercy, which is great towards thy People : *For the Lord's sake*, (v. 17.) *for thy Name's sake* which is in him, who is the expected Messiah, *The Lord our Righteousness.* — This Passage in the Prophet Daniel is the more to be noticed, as it is so parallel with the disputed Text, in *Isaiab*, — giving us a full and ample Explication of the Confession, *All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags :* and what makes

it the more emphatical, is, that the Phrase, *our Righteousnesses* (in the plural Number) is no where else to be found, that I know of, in the whole Bible, but in these two Passages of *Isaiah* and *Daniel*; and these two Prophets lived in different Periods of Time, near or quite a Century distant from one another; both used this Expression in Prayer, and on the like Occasion, both pleading the Cause and being the Mouth of the Church and People of God: so that we have here the Church speaking the same Language in various remote Ages; and alike renouncing *their own Righteousnesses* even as *filthy Rags*, at one Time and another, in the most solemn Manner; not presuming to utter a Word in their own Justification, not resting *in the Law*, nor drawing any Argument from their *moral Vertues*, when pleading with God.

In the next Place, Let us take a View of *Job's* Example, a Man *perfect and upright*, beyond all in his Day, yet how full is he of Language equivalent to the Confession in the Text? *Job* 9. 2, 3. *How should Man be just with God? (or before God) If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a Thousand. §. 15. Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make Supplication to my Judge. §. 20. If I justify my self, my own Mouth shall condemn me. §. 30,—32. If I wash my self with Snow-Water, and make my Hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the Ditch, and mine own Cloaths shall abhor me. For he is not a Man, that I should answer him, and we should come together in Judgment. So Chap. 10. 15. If I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my Head. Chap. 13. 23. How many are mine Iniquities & Sins? Make me to know my Transgression and my Sins. Chap. 14. 4. Who can bring a clean Thing out of an unclean? not one.—Tho' *Job* in his Conferences often pleads his Integrity, in Opposition to the Censures of his uncharitable Friends; yet in his Addresses to God, his usual Manner was to humble himself thus, and renounce all Confidence in *his own Righteousness*. And tho' sometimes in an Hour of Temptation, the good Man fell into some Expressions too impatient*

patient and arrogant, and discovering the Remains of a Self-righteous Spirit in him; yet when recovered out of those ill Frames, and brought to himself, he returns to his Self-judging and Self-humbling Language. Chap. 40. 3, 4, 5. *Then Job answered the Lord, and said, Behold I am vile! what shall I answer thee? I will lay my Hand upon my Mouth; once have I spoken, but I will not answer: yea, twice, but I will proceed no further.* He here retracts (makes his Recantation) and calls back the querulous and vain-glorious Expressions, that had dropt from him, when he spake unadvisedly with his Lips, by way of faulting of God, and exalting himself, and setting forth *his own Righteousness*.—God's Reply to him shews, that this Kind of Language was what Job had his Eye to. *†. 7, 8. Gird up thy Loins now like a Man: I will demand of thee; and declare thou unto me. Wilt thou also disannul my Judgment? Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayst be righteous?*—And upon the whole, we find Job most intirely submitting to the Righteousness of God, and no longer daring to use any such Expression as might look as if he were going about to establish his own Righteousness. When Job answered the Lord, he concluded with saying, *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the Ear, but now mine Eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor my self, and repent in Dust and Ashes.*—What can this mean less than confessing that all his Righteousness was as filthy Rags?

So Job's Friends, tho' they did not always speak the Thing that is right, yet are judged to have been good Men, and in their Speeches discover much of a humble Spirit towards God, even while passing mistaken Censures upon Job. Thus Eliphaz speaks, Chap. 15. 14,--16. *What is Man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a Woman, that he should be righteous? Behold, he putteth no Trust in his Saints; yea, the Heavens are not clean in his Sight: How much more abominable and filthy is Man, which drinketh Iniquity like Water!* So Bildad says, Chap. 25. 4. *How then can Man be justified with God? or how can he be clean, that is born of a Woman: Behold even to the Moon,*

and it shineth not ; yea, the Stars are not pure in his Sight : How much less Man, that is a Worm ; and the Son of Man, that is a Worm ! (y. 5, 6.) — What is this, in true Construction, but pronouncing all our Righteousnesses to be as filthy Rags !

What short of this do *Abraham's* Words import ? Gen. 18. 27. Behold now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but Dust and Ashes ! — Dust by Nature, and Ashes by Corruption (as some have glossed on the Place) such was the humble Sense that *Abraham* had of himself, and of his own Righteousness : but if *Abraham* were justified by Works, he had whereof to glory. — So *Jacob*, tho' he could plead his Righteousness, as answering for him, respecting his Dealings with *Laban*, yet when he has to do with GOD, he confesses himself less than the least of all his Mercies. (Gen. 32. 10.) And how then must his own Righteousness appear in his Eyes ? Even as filthy Rags. — In like manner *David*, the Man after God's own Heart, tho' he could appeal to the supream Judge, in the Controversy between him and his Adversaries, and rely on God's Faithfulness to answer him in that Case, yet he saw at the same Time such Failures staining all his Righteousness in the Eyes of a Heart-searching God, and consequently such Grounds of God's entering into an angry Controversy with him, in which he could never stand, that he earnestly deprecates it. Psal. 143. 2. Enter not into Judgment with thy Servant ; for in thy Sight shall no Man living be justified. And again, Psal. 130. 3. If thou, Lord, shouldst mark Iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand ! The Reason of this is suggested by *Solomon* in his Prayer, 2 Chron. 6. 36. For there is no Man which sinneth not. Which Consideration was doubtless one Motive to his using that Expression (y. 18.) But will God in very Deed dwell with Men on the Earth ! Even good Men, the Saints in the Earth, tho' excellent comparatively with others, yet by Reason of Sin, that dwelleth in them, that often breaketh out, and taints all their Righteousnesses, have just Occasion to be astonished at God's Condescension in dwelling with them.

them. — What but a Sense of his *moral* Imperfections, as well as intellectual, drew that Confession from *Agur*? Prov. 30. 2. *Surely I am more brutish than any Man, and have not the understanding of a Man!* Far from being pure in his own Eyes, or from not thinking *his own Righteousness* to be as *filthy Rags*. — Again, what but a Sense of his Sinfulness and the Imperfection of *his own Righteousness* put *John* the Baptist in such humble Confusion, when *Jesus* came to be baptized of him, and made him confess and wonder, saying, *I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me!* Mat. 3. 14. — Again, had not the Apostle *Peter* some such humbling View of his Case, when *he* fell down at *Jesus* Knees, saying, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful Man, O Lord!* Luk. 5. 8. — Tho' as to the first Part of his Speech, it may be said of him, as on another Occasion, *he spake this, not knowing what he said*; for he was *astonished* at the Miracle he saw: yet it's evident, he had at the same Time a very striking View and humbling Sense of his *Sinfulness*, which made him appear in his own Eyes very vile, and unworthy that Christ should honour him with his Presence. What then must be his Apprehensions of *his own Righteousness*? — And may we not well think the same View of himself was the Reason of *Moses's* Conduct, when God appeared to him in the burning Bush, of which we read, *Exod. 3. 6. And Moses hid his Face; for he was afraid to look upon God.* The practical Language of this is like that of *Job*, Behold I am vile; and that of *Isaiab*, Wo is me, for *I am undone*. He doubtless conceived of himself appearing in a *dirty Hue* (morally speaking) and utterly unworthy to approach the Presence of a holy God. He looked, in his own Apprehension, like one in *filthy Rags*; even like the high Priest we read of, *Zech. 3. 3. Now Joshua was clothed with filthy Garments, and stood before the Angel.* This Case was indeed typical, and *Joshua's* filthy Garments may be considered as emblematical of the sordid Figure or Appearance, that the *Saints* themselves and their *Righteousnesses*, if viewed in the Glass of the Law,

must make before a holy God. *Joshua's* having his filthy Garments taken away, and Change of Raiment given him, typically represents the Need there is of our having the *filthy Rags* of our own *Righteousness* put away from before the Eye of vindictive Justice; and shews us, that we can appear with Safety before a holy God, only as cloathed with *Change of Raiment*, the Garment given us, even *the Righteousness which is of Faith*.

Indeed our Author (Page 16.) pretends, that *the personal Righteousness of the Saints* is the *fine Linnen, clean and white*, spoken of by *John*, Rev. 19. 8. Now, tho' this were granted, yet if we consult the Context, it seems as if it were the Righteousness of Saints in their glorify'd State, who indeed *walk with God in white*, that is represented under this Similitude: and if the perfect *Righteousness of the Saints in Light*, be represented as such a *Robe of Glory*, this doth not infer, that the imperfect Righteousness of Saints *in the Earth*, ought to have the same Resemblance applied to it. This surely will not bear the Comparison: For the best Garment of personal Righteousness on Earth needs to be *washed*, and can only be *made white in the Blood of the Lamb*.—Without being washed with the Blood of Christ, and as considered in themselves, compared to the Law to which they should be conformable, *all our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags*.—But the Righteousness of CHRIST is a *spotless Robe*: And this has generally been thought to be the *white Raiment* (spoken of Rev. 3. 18.) which our Saviour counsels us to buy of him. The only Cloathing sufficient to *hide the Shame of our Nakedness*, to hide the *Nakedness* of our *moral Vertues*, as well as to cover our Sins, is that *best Robe*, the Robe of Christ's Righteousness, which is upon all them that believe.—Agreeable to this, the Apostle *Paul*, tells us, *he counted all Things but Loss and Dung, that he might win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own Righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith*, Phil. 3. 8, 9.—This is the *fine Linnen, clean*
and

and white, with which Believers are arrayed, safe-guarded, and secured unto the Day of Judgment, and at last presented spotless unto God.—This is the *Wedding-Garment*, in which all shall appear, that will be approved Guests, when the *Marriage of the Lamb* is come.—They will all pursuant to the Doctrine taught by Christ, say from first to last, *We are unprofitable Servants*.—Their everlasting Song will be in such Strains as these, “*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, who hath redeemed us to God by his Blood, who hath finished Transgression, made an End of Sin, and brought in an everlasting Righteousness*.”—They will eternally celebrate the *Kindness and Love of God our Saviour*, in some such Language as that of the Apostle, Tit. 3.5,—7. *Not by Works of Righteousness which we have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us, by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his Grace, we should be Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life*.

To conclude this Head, we may observe, the Apostle having given us a Catalogue of many primitive Saints, tells us, — *These all died in Faith*, Heb. 11.13.—even as he had before remarked, Chap. 10. 38. *The Just shall live by Faith*,—in the Prophet’s Words. Now it is of the very Nature of *Faith* to exclude *boasting*, and to renounce all Confidence in our own *Righteousness*.—Surely whether living or dying, we should make it our Concern, that we may be strong in *Faith*, giving Glory to God: yet it must be notic’d, where there is *Faith unfeigned*, this always *purifieth the Heart*, and influenceth to follow universal *Holiness*; and besure will not permit us to neglect the Duties of *Morality*, or slight any of the social Vertues; for *Faith worketh by Love*, both towards God, and towards our Neighbour.—There is the *Obedience of Faith*, as well as the *Dependence of Faith*; and both are exemplified in the sound Believer.—Upon the whole, I must say, we under the Gospel have as little Foundation for *boasting* in our moral Attainments, as had the Jewish Church,

Church in the Days of the Prophets ; and therefore should *not be high-minded, but fear*, tho' the God of all Grace has *provided some better Things for us*, than he did of old for them : *fear*, I say, lest our superiour and singular Advantages should only serve to aggravate our Sins, in the Sight of that God, *who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity*, tho' it were but *the Iniquity of our holy Things*, without Detestation, in whomsoever it be found. We should *take heed, lest there be in any of us an evil Heart of Unbelief*, in departing from the living God ; and ought to *fear, lest a Promise being left us of entring into his Rest*, any of us should seem to come short of it. The Jewish Nation were at last broken off because of Unbelief ; and we stand by Faith ; we should therefore take Warning from their Sin and Ruin, and beware that we do not fall after the same Example of Unbelief.—And it is certain, that as the Jewish Church ever did, while standing by Faith, so the true Christian Church ever will, unite in this grand Article of Lamentation, and Self-abasing Confession before God, *All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags*.——I have stayed the longer upon the Head of producing parallel Texts of Scripture with the Text insisted on, to shew, that as holy Men of God spake & wrote their Sentiments on the Case under present Examination, by the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, their united Testimony sufficiently proves, in what Sense we are to understand the Words, and are of sufficient Force to put our Author and all Gain-sayers to Silence.——Thus much for the first general Head.

It was propos'd in the next Place,

II. *To attempt the Removal of those Prejudices, our Author has taken Pains to raise against many sound & orthodox Protestant Expositors and others, by his harsh & unjust Reflections, of a personal Aspect, and by his unfair Representations of their Principles ; some of which I shall mention, and endeavour a Vindication of.*

In the Introduction to his Discourse, and elsewhere, this Gentleman exhibits very loud and bitter Complaints against certain Expositors, and others that join with them,

as having *wretchedly perverted & horribly abused* his Text, *All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags*; and as having advanced many Opinions in Religion, which he insinuates to be of a very bad Nature and dangerous Tendency.

Now in order to make the fairest and fullest Answer to these Complaints, I shall take this Method. (1.) Consider *who* are the Expositors and others here intended by the Author.—(2.) Repeat in his own Words some of the indecent and severe *Reflections* he has cast upon them, and hint at some of his *Misrepresentations* of their Opinions.—And (3.) Defend their Memory and Character against the *Injustice* done them; and withal attempt a brief Vindication of their *Principles*, as it comes in my Way in the Course of these Remarks.

1. We are to consider *who* the *Expositors* and *others* are, that the Author had a View to in his Complaints and Censures.—Now this, I think, will sufficiently appear by the Description he has in Effect given of them, in remonstrating against many of their known Tenets, as well as their Opinion upon his Text. Tho' he has not, in several Instances, fairly stated those Doctrines of theirs, which he excepts against, but has represented them in Language designed, as it seems, to excite a Prejudice both against them and the Patrons and Abettors of them, in his less judicious and more unwary Readers: yet upon the whole, I think, he has left himself no Room for Evasion here, by pretending as tho' he had really no View to such Expositors and their Adherents; for it is apparent, that our Author's Eye was to such as held the Doctrines of *personal Election, particular Redemption, original Sin, efficacious Grace, imputed Righteousness, justification by Faith, the Saints final Perseverance*,—and in a Word, *God's Sovereignty in Man's Salvation*.—All these Doctrines seem very plainly struck at, either directly or by Consequence, in his Discourse, and some of them treated with supercilious Disdain & Contempt.—In the general, he explodes them under the opprobrious Name of "*Libertine Notions*," P. 9, and he observes, that for the propagating them, viz. these

Notions,

Notions, “ No Passage perhaps in the Book of God has
 “ been more *shamefully perverted*, than this which he has
 “ chosen to discourse upon : The Words (says he) as they
 “ are commonly received, are a standing Reflection on all
 “ Virtue.” Hence we may with the highest Reason conclude, our Author’s Invectives are levelled against Protestant Expositors, and those in special of a Calvinistical Character and Perswasion, and those that adhere to the like *Principles*, which the Ministers in *New-England* generally have done, and with plain scriptural Gospel *Warrant*. — It is therefore strange and very *lamentable*, that any should be found among us in these Churches and in the Ministry too, venting such Indignation and Scorn at a *Notion* of his Text (by his own Confession) commonly received; yea, denying, and even deriding, and bantering those great and important Scripture-Doctrines, which it has been made use of to support, (with many other *parallel Texts*, above cited to, under the foregoing Head) which were so dear to our pious Predecessors, and which have hitherto been so commonly received in the whole Protestant World; as appears particularly by the publick *Confessions of Faith*, and *Catechisms*, as well as other Writings they have left us as Memorials of their Belief, and for Helps to us to understand the Scriptures, and that our Faith may be fixed in the Doctrines contained in them. I think it no Trespas upon the Rules of Charity, to suppose our Author had some Reference to these, as they are commonly read and valued among us; and I look on the Assembly’s Catechism in particular, as struck at in his Discourse, (and no Wonder, when he palpably denies it in some of its essential Points, and declares (by credible Information) against instructing his own, or other Children of his Charge therein) Besure the distinguishing Principles of it are plainly level’d against. — But I pray God, that this *excellent Catechism* may still be had in Esteem and Use among us, even to the latest Posterity, notwithstanding the Attempts made to disparage it. O that all were suitably disposed to honour such valuable Remains of our worthy Ancestors, and to

remember

remember them which have spoken to us the good Word of God, and to follow their Faith, considering the End of their Conversation.—But I come, as was proposed,

2. To rehearse, in our Author's own Words, some of the many injurious Reflections, he has cast on those Expositors and others, and hint at some of his Misrepresentations of their Opinions. — By the Title of his Discourse, *Protestant Expositors in general*, with many *Protestant Preachers* and others, who understand his Text to intend the Saints acknowledgement of their *own Righteousnesses* to be *as filthy Rags*, all these (I say) stand expressly indicted before the World, of *Absurdity* and *Blasphemy* in *depreciating moral Virtue*; and he thus draws their black Character in the Discourse itself (*Page 6.*) “Certain it is, that
“ the Word of God—has either thro’ the *Weakness, In-*
“ *attention* and *Ignorance*, or more criminal Designs of
“ its Expositors, (by some such I say) in all Ages of the
“ World been *wretchedly abused*, to serve the Purposes of
“ *Error, Superstition* and *Vice*.—And perhaps nothing has
“ had a more fatal Tendency to delude the Simple, and
“ harden the Prophane, than judging of Scripture Doc-
“ trines from particular *Scraps* of Scripture, and from
“ the bare *Jingle* of Words, &c.

And then this Gentleman (*Page 7.*) in enumerating the particular Opinions (concerning Election, original Sin—) held by these Expositors and others, tells us, “that for
“ want of attending to the real Design and Drift of the
“ Author, and to the whole current of Inspiration, as to
“ the Point under Examination,” it has come to pass that
when they have met with this or the other *historical* Passage in Scripture, (several of which he alludes to) “they have rashly concluded,” this and the other *Doctrine* to be founded on the Word of God.—Then he goes on to say,
“ Thus *stupified* and *bewildered with Sounds*, without at-
“ tending to the *true Sense* of Revelation, the pure and
“ perfect Religion of Jesus—is in many Places turned into
“ an idle Speculation, a mysterious Faith, a senseless Supersti-
“ tion, and a groundless Recumbency; and in short, every
Thing

“ Thing but what in Fact it is.”—And he observes (Page 8.) “The like *Delusions*, and by the same Means, have been introduced, in judging our spiritual Estate.” Here he mentions several Instances, and particularly observes how “ some *imagine, God has from all Eternity set his Love up- on them*”—“ Others (says he) you will find amusing themselves, because they have the *perfect Righteousness of Christ imputed to them*.— And he speaks of “ their *affected Sorrow* and groaning for Sin, especially for the Sins of *others* they never had any Hand in:”—which looks like a sarcastical Sneer at those that bewail and lament their *own* and *others* Sins and indwelling Corruptions. Perhaps he has not considered that remarkable Text, Ezek. 9. 2, 4. *He that was clothed in Linnen, with the Writer’s Inkborn by his Side, — was commanded to go through the midst of the City, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a Mark upon the Foreheads of the Men that sigh and that cry for all the ABOMINATIONS, that be done in the midst thereof.*—— Our Author appears to be something upon his Guard here, and perhaps with a View to leaving open a Door for his Retreat, in Case his Discourse should meet with Opposition, has thrust in qualifying Clauses, or restraining Phrases, not only in his Account of the *Delusions* he instances in, but also in his Description of the *commonly received Doctrines*, by which (as hinted before) he has not a little misrepresented them. For it is evident, by the general run of his Discourse, and by some pointed Passages in particular, that what he strikes at, is the *commonly received Notion* (as he phrases it) respecting one Doctrine & another. And if he really meant not so, but had his Eye to some singular Enthusiastical Delusions, or Antinomian Dotages, I must say, then he has been *but beating the Air*, and in a great Degree been impertinent. Whereas doubtless he intended the Principles of Calvinists, and has by his foul Misrepresentations thrown a great deal of Dirt upon their Character.

— Besure he has passed very severe Censures on the *commonly received Notion* of his Text, and so constructively and obliquely

liquely on all the *Expositors* and others that embrace that Meaning of the Text. He seems so offended and incensed at what he calls “this modern Stile of *filthy Rags*, as applied to the Vertues of good Men,” that every Page almost has Indications of his Displeasure at and Contempt for those who make this Application. — Thus he speaks (Page 18.) — “Shall we call this, I say, *filthy Rags*? — “God forbid! God forbid! Such a Thought should ever “enter into our Hearts; and if thro’ the *Wickedness* of “them it should happen to steal in, let us look upon it “as a *greater Evil*, and be more solicitous to cast it out, “than if we were possessed with *seven Devils*.” — It follows then, according to our Author, — where *such a Tho’t* (upon his Text) has been already admitted by *Expositors* or others, — and he himself owns it is the *Notion commonly received*, This must be imputed to the Wickedness of their *Hearts*, unless a profound *Ignorance* may afford them some Excuse. And if any will still harbour such a Thought, especially after being instructed and warned by our *Author*, he declares them to be in a worse Case, than if they were possessed even with *seven Devils*. — And truly, according to this Gentleman’s Discourse, if it be considered how many *pernicious Doctrines* and *Delusions* are so nearly connected with the common Notion of his Text, he must needs suppose us, to be in a worse Condition than the Gadarene we read of, *Mark 5*. who being asked *What is thy Name?* answered, *My Name is Legion*, for we are many. — Accordingly, our *Author* (Page 23.) represents this *Thought*, and the Doctrines commonly connected with it, as the “Fictions of weak or *disordered Brains*, “every Article a down-right Affront to *commonSense*” and doubtless referring to those who entertain the same, he there speaks of some “who by a few *Rabble-charming Sounds* are converted into such *fiery Bigots*, as to be ready to die, in the Defence of *Stupidity and Nonsense?*” Yea, “even to kill — (and that for the Glory of God) all “that are so *heretical & graceless* as not to renounce their “Reason in Complaisance to their *sovereign Dictates* —

These

These he describes as the “happy Few, that have Sense enough, and dare trust their own Faculties, so far as to judge themselves what is right— That by no Arts how Sanctimonious soever, can ever be brought to believe; and (much less profess when they don’t believe) Things repugnant to the first Principles of Reason.

Now these *Encomiums* are doubtless intended for such as join with him, in condemning the *common Notion* of his Text, and the other common Notions that usually bear it Company: but his foregoing *Reflections* are levelled against the Patrons and Abettors of the commonly received Construction of the Text, That *our own Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags*.— This was evidently his Design, by those Remarks of his, toward the close of the Head he is upon— Page 24. —“ But if this be *Revelation and Grace*, to vilify humane Nature, and disparage all our Improvements in divine *Vertues*,—so far, I say, as any take their Conceptions from such Corruptions of Christianity, they must necessarily be prejudiced against it. *Thunder* we ever so loud without previous *Lightning*, *He that believeth not shall be damned*, it will signify nothing; for they will be *damned* before they will believe.”—These closing Remarks sufficiently shew against whom his *Invectives* are multiplied, as the Promoters of *Libertine Notions*.— And he insinuates, that he himself (horrid to be spoken) will be *damned* before he will believe the Notion commonly received in these Matters. — Nor can this be wondered at, if it carries such a monstrous *Guilt* as he insinuates, by saying—*Pa.* 17.—“ Nor can this in Reason be tho’t a common Reflection on the divine Being; because it is blaspheming of Him in his dearest Attributes”.—So in another Place, *Pa.* 19, 20.—He represents the commonly received Notion of his Text, as bordering upon (if not being in Fact) the unpardonable Sin. His Words are,—“ Blaspheming the miraculous Powers of the *Holy Ghost* was formerly” [why formerly? as if it were not also now]—“ called an unpardonable Sin; nor can any Reason be given (if it be done with equal Light

“ and

“ and Malice) why reproaching his *Fruits* and *Vertues*,
 “ should be deemed *less heinous*, or meet with a less fatal
 “ Doom.” Now, that our Author supposes these Expo-
 sitors and others, who deem their *own Righteousnesses*, and
 the Righteousnesses of the best Men upon Earth, to be
 as *filthy Rags*, (in the Sense I have shewn above in the fore-
 going Part of these Remarks) which he interprets a re-
 proaching the *Fruits* and *Vertues* of the *Holy Spirit*, are
 guilty of doing this against *Light*, if not with *Malice*, is
 very evident, from the gross Reflections he casts upon
 them, as having “shamefully perverted,” as having “put
 a *false Gloss* and *horrid Abuse* on the Text, &c. *Pa.* 9, 10.
 But more clearly still from what he observes,—*Pa.* 22:—
 “ After all these recommending Characters (I say) of a
 “ truly good Man’s own *personal Righteousness*, it would
 “ be too great a Reflection on your Understanding, to sup-
 “ pose, there is one Man that does not see the *Injustice*
 “ and *Wickedness*, the *Impiety* and *Blasphemy*, of calling
 “ *this Righteousness filthy Rags*.” A great Complement
 verily this is to his Hearers *Understanding*: but a very
 base Reflection at the same Time, on the moral Character,
 as well as Understanding of all those learned & excellent
 Expositors and others, who have not, or do not abuse the
 Text, as I think he has done: this, it seems, has provoked
 him to a high Pitch of Resentment, so that he can scarce
 contain himself within any Bounds of Decency, or of *com-
 mon Modesty*.—Therefore (to mention another Passage) he
 breaks out in that rude, abrupt Exclamation—*Pa.* 19—
 “ The very same Things—(O shocking Thought!) that
 are commonly stiled *filthy Rags*” —By this he would ex-
 press his Indignation and Amazement at the *Stupidity* and
Impiety of those old Protestants, and their Abettors and
 Followers, who have interpreted the Text, according to
 what he calls the common Notion of it. “O shocking
 Thought!” as much as to say, O *horrid Abuse* of the sacred
 Text! the most stupid *Nonsense*! and equal Blasphemy! to
 indulge such a Thought, a greater Evil surely than if
 they were possessed with *seven Devils*! or in *Virgil’s Lan-*
 guage,

guage, *Monstrum horrendum informe ingens cui Lumen ademptum* ! O the unparallel'd Blindness ! the deep deformed tremendous monstrous Darkness, which attends these Expositors, and their Followers ! that such a Thought ever entered into their Hearts, it was because there was no *Light in them* ! This is the plain Import of our Author's Parenthesis, "*(O shocking THOUGHT !)*" —

There's one Reflection more, I shall take some Notice of, (tho' of a different Nature from the rest) and that is the remarkable Fling he has at a common Usage we have among us, — That of keeping publick *Fasts*. — He takes Occasion to say upon it, — Page 9. — "The Solemnities of a *Fast-Day* — your *Saints* that depend on their *devotional Exercises*, not only prefer to all other Duties, but are ready to imagine they are a sufficient Atonement for all their past Vices, and of greater Account, to procure the Blessing of Heaven, than all the *heathenish Morality*, the *abominable good Works*, that can be preached by all your legal *Self-righteous Men* on Earth." How came our Author to pick out *Fast-Days*, and not *Thanksgiving Days* as well, to make them the Subject of his Banter and Derision, when these are some of our usual Solemnities also ? I leave others to judge the Reason. But it seems our Author has a wonderful Power of Penetration into the Sentiments of your *Saints* (as he terms them) on *Fast-Days*. However, tho' there is Danger on all Hands, of People's falling into the Error hinted at, carnal Confidence in Duties, yet I presume to say, those who extol personal Righteousness in the Manner our Author very apparently has done, to the Disregard of imputed Righteousness, and who so applaud *moral Vertue*, to the Neglect of Faith in the Blood of Atonement, seem to me to be of all Men most in Danger of depending on their own Duties, whether devotional Exercises, or vertuous Practices, and of cherishing a vain Hope, as if those would sufficiently atone for their past Sins, or as if by Works of Righteousness which they have done, and not according to his Mercy, God should save them.

But

But I now dismiss this, and pass to the next Thing in order.—Which is,

3. To attempt the doing some *Justice* to the Memory and Character of these injured Expositors and others, on whom our Author has so liberally cast his Reflections and to offer something in Vindication of their Principles so misrepresented and reproached by him.

It would be almost an endless Task, to go over all the Instances of Calumny and Satyr, that are of a personal Aspect, and to recite all the Misrepresentations & Abuses, in Relation to Principles, which are to be found in his Discourse, with a particular Réply to each distinctly. And as to some of them it may justly be said, *Recitasse est refutasse*—to recite them is a sufficient Refutation of them. I shall therefore content my self with the following Reflections and Replies, which I think may suffice to my present Purpose.

I shall begin, as seems most natural, with some Remarks by Way of Vindication of those Expositors and others, against our Author's more *general* Reflections & Censures. The Scandal he has thrown out on this Occasion, falls heavy on the Character of many eminent *Worthies*, from the Reformation, down to this Day, and of the Ministers in *New-England* in particular. It is a black Description indeed he gives of them, while he represents them as *weak, inattentive, ignorant*, or led by *wicked Designs*, &c. — But surely if this Gentleman had duly considered his juvenile Years, whereby he has had but little Opportunity for Inquiry;—And had he consulted that Scripture, *1 Tim. 5. 1.* comparing it with *Chap. 3. 6.*—I think, the serious Meditation hereof must needs have laid him under some Restraint, and taught him a little more Modesty, than to spit in the Face of his Fathers, and stigmatize so many famous Divines, and excellent Christians, as *weak, inattentive, ignorant* and *wickedly designing* Men,—only because their Exposition of his Text, and their Opinions concurrent with it, don't agree with his Sentiments.

Our Author appears by his Title-Page, to imagine he has full Warrant for what he has done, from that Charge of the Apostle to *Timothy*, 1 Epist. 4. 11, 12. — *These Things command and teach—Let no Man despise thy Youth—* His putting these Words in the Frontispiece of his Discourse, it seems, he expected would stop the Mouth of all Objectors ; but I presume, the Parallel will by no Means hold between the Evangelist, and this our young Preacher ; except perhaps in Point of Age.—*Timothy* was the *Apostle's own Son in the Faith*,—Chap. 1. 2. It's well for our Author if he be found deserving of that Character, and not rather an illegitimate Offspring, *who concerning Faith has made Shipwreck*,—as the Manner of some was even in the Apostle's Days, *ψ. 19.*—And if we consider the Words cited by him, in their Connection with what either goes before, or follows in the same Chapter, we shall possibly perceive they give no Countenance to our Author's petulant Censures and Reflections.— *Let no Man despise thy Youth.* It does not mean to flush the young Preacher with a vain-glorious Idea of his Authority, and to excite haughty Airs : but to impress him with a humble Sense of the peculiar *Need* he has to take Care, in such an Age of Life, so exposed to Vanity, Precipitancy, and the Disadvantages arising from want of Experience and Observation, lest he should in his publick Ministrations or private Conversation behave amiss, or manage imprudently, so as to give just Occasion to others to *despise his Youth*.—That *Timothy* might know how he ought to behave himself in the House of God, the Apostle being such an one as *Paul* the Aged, sends him particular Directions, Cautions and Warnings. — He reminds him, *ψ. 1.* of the Predictions of the Spirit (alluding as some think to *Dan. 11. 36, 39.*) speaking expressly, that in the *latter Times* some shall depart from the Faith, giving heed to seducing Spirits : The formidable Appearance of which predicted Event, seems too evident in *our Day*—whilst some are so visibly *fallen from the Truth*, and others *giving heed to Seducers*. Alas ! is it not too notorious to be denied, that with Respect to the

Belief

Belief of the Truth, Gospel-Truth, or the *Doctrine* of *Christ* revealed in the holy Scriptures, there is a lamentable Defection in these Times (which in Regard of Error, as well as Vice, are indeed *perilous Times*,) particularly as I apprehend, in our Author's Discourse.—The Apostle, we may further observe, proceeds, *ſ. 6.* to tell *Timothy*, in Case he duly put the Brethren, his christian Hearers, in Remembrance of what he himself had how been admonished of, and warned against, and if he *nourished* up himself and them in *sound Doctrine*, such as *Paul* preached, and filled his Epistles with, and which the Scriptures lay so great Stress upon, that then he would approve himself a *good Minister of Jesus Christ*; but not else.—On the whole, I infer, That if young *Ministers* would avoid having their *Youth despised*, one of the best Methods they can take, and that on which their future Usefulness and Reputation, as good Ministers of Christ depend, is to look to it that they be not meer *Teachers of the Law*, or unskilful Preachers of Morality, but that they themselves, and others by their Means, be *nourished up in the Words of Faith and sound Doctrine*, established in the *Faith*, as it was once delivered to the Saints.—And another Expedient I may venture to suggest, as a good Preservative, to the young Minister in special, against being *despised*, is, in the Language of the same Apostle, Rom. 12. 3.—*Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every Man the Measure of Faith.* It was then to be *Timothy's* Care, in his Conduct, to guard against every Thing that had a Tendency to blemish his Character, as a Christian and a Minister; which would sufficiently defend him from being despised, tho' but a Youth.

But to return,—The Expositors and others, tho' by our Author characterized as *weak, inattentive, ignorant*, or acting on *more criminal Designs*,—yet, for my Part, I can't conceive, what these Designs could be, unless they were the Designs of magnifying the Grace of God, of exalting the Redeemer, and of humbling vain Man.—These were their

avowed *Designs*, and are consonant to the very Spirit and Scope of the *Gospel-Doctrine*, as is obvious from the whole Tenor of the sacred Writings : yet will our Author impute it to them as a Crime, or what they had a criminal Design in, that they did not with him cry up extravagantly the Dignity of *human Nature*, extol *personal good Behaviour*, or magnify their own and others *moral Vertue*, beyond all reasonable Bounds, and even set it up for their *justifying* Righteousness before God,—but rather on the contrary deplored the Weakness of the human Understanding, and the Depravity of the human Will,—and freely confessed their own Weakness and Sinfulness, and Unworthiness in themselves of the divine Favour and Acceptance : grounding this humble Sense of their lamentable Case on Scripture-Testimony, back'd by their own daily Experience, both which they found uniting to prove, *That all their Righteousnesses were as filthy Rags!* Or shall we suppose, that the great Disgust our Author has taken up against these Expositors, was from this,—That by the Construction *they* put on the Words of his Text, it gave Disturbance to the Pope and whole Conclave of *Rome*, whose *Explication* is so near of a Piece and the same Make with his. If then the *criminal Designs*, imputed to these Expositors, lay in their so interpreting the Scripture as they did, with a View the more effectually to oppose the *Popish* Heresy, and maintain the Protestant Cause, their pretended Crime is their Glory; and in this they may well triumph, rejoicing in God, that thro' Grace they have been enabled to bear a faithful and publick Testimony to the Truth, even as the Truth is in Jesus;—and not a few of them have by suffering Martyrdom, chearfully sealed their Doctrine with their very Blood.—Now, whatever the Author may, upon a serious and calm Review of his Discourse, think of the severe Charges therein laid against so many excellent Men, Men of God, Men of Prayer, Men of Piety, Probity, Penetration and Learning, exemplary for the Practice of all moral Vertue and religious Duty, mighty in the Scrip-
tures,

tures, studious (many of them to Admiration) to find out the Mind of God in his Word, faithful to declare it, and careful to transmit the same to Posterity ; being truly burning and shining Lights in their several Stations, some (and not a few of them) appearing even as brazen Walls or impregnable Bulwarks against the Heresies of *Rome*, and Tyrannies of the *Popish* Hierarchy, principal Founders under Christ of the Protestant Churches, and Pillars in the *Spiritual House of God*, eminent Promoters of the Kingdom of Grace, which spread itself far and wide among the Nations, and at length reached these *New-England* Shores ; where the God of all Grace in our Beginning-times furnished and adorned the Churches here with Ministers of the Word and Expounders of the Scripture, that were (at least many of them) endowed with uncommon Gifts and Graces Ministerial, Men that had much Communion with God, much Insight into divine Things, and were deeply acquainted, by Study, Experience and Observation, with the Doctrine of Grace and Mystery of Godliness taught in the Gospel ; Men, who after *Paul's* Example aimed principally to know and preach *CHRIST and him crucified* ; whose Zeal to maintain the Faith and Order of the Gospel (now so exploded and ridicul'd by some of their Successors) led them over into this remote and inhospitable Wilderness ; where, we have no Reason to Doubt, they served their Generation according to the Will of God, under next to insuperable Difficulties, and having fallen asleep, their precious Souls have been taken up to the World of Spirits, appearing (we may venture to say) with Crowns very bright and weighty, in proportion to their arduous Labours of Faith and Patience in the Cause of Christ : — now, I say, that all these our pious Fore-fathers, all the godly Reformers, all Protestant Confessors, Expositors, Preachers, and Professors in general, from the Beginning of the Reformation, that did not concur in Sentiment with our Author, should fall together under the Lash of this Gentleman's Pen, is truly surprizing ! Had these Invectives and false Accusations (as I think I may term them without any

Breach of good Manners) proceeded from some old hardned Papist, or from an avowed and inveterate *Enemy* to all Revelation, in that Case Allowances might reasonably be made.—But for a professed Protestant, for one sustaining the Character of a Minister, in a Protestant Church, and One but yet in his *Youth*, and but as it were of Yesterday, for such a One (I say) to take upon him to rebuke, not a single *Elder*, but many, and instead of *entreating them as Fathers*, thus to *behave himself proudly against the Ancient*; to traduce the Memory of the Dead, and asperse the Character of the Living, even of Multitudes of Christ's precious Ministers and People,—This, I must confess, appears to me next to a Prodigy; or, to speak in his own Language, an Instance of *Stupidity & Nonsense*. It is indeed one of the greatest *Absurdities* in Conduct, equal at least to any in Opinion, which those that he speaks of as *converted by Rabble-charming Sounds*, into fiery Bigots, have been ready to die in the Defence of. But it seems according to this Writer's Insinuation, *Pa. 6.* these Expositors *criminal Designs* respect the Scriptures being “*wretchedly abused to serve the Purposes of Error, Superstition and Vice,*” and being expounded so as to have had a fatal Tendency to “*delude the Simple, and barden the Prophane.*” If this be not what he intends by the criminal Designs of the Expositors he speaks of, I am quite at a Loss about his meaning. And I must confess, if the Case be in Truth as he insinuates, they must be guilty of *criminal Designs* indeed, or at best of very perverse Management, and wretched Abuse of the Word of God: But I trust, the *contrary* has been sufficiently evinced already, and may be confirmed in the Course of these Remarks.

Our Author in the next Place intimates (as I suppose) what he thinks the Occasion of this *wretched Abuse* of God's Word, — that is, “*judging of Scripture-Doctrines from particular Scraps of Scripture, and from the bare Jingle of Words*, without attending to the general Drift and Design of the *Author*, and the whole Current of Inspiration as to the Point under Examination.” I think truly

truly this Gentleman stands here condemned out of his own Mouth : and that of the Apostle, Rom. 2. 1. *Thou art inexcusable, O Man that judgest* — seems justly applicable to him, so far as it concerns his Discourse before us : For it must be evident to every observing Reader, how this very Way of *judging of Scripture-Doctrines*, which he has here censured, runs through the whole of his own Discourse. His Text itself he has in a Manner treated as an independent Sentence. And tho' he has hinted at one Verse of the Context, yet he has done nothing like analysing, or commenting on the whole, or considering what immediately goes before, or follows this disputed Text, in order to state it's true Meaning ; so far from this, that he almost forgets its general Tenor and Form. — As to the Arguments all along advanced in his Discourse, they are mostly enforced only by a single Text or two (without his appearing to attend to their Coherence and Dependence) or in his own Phrase, by *particular Scraps of Scripture* ; and these, many of them at least, seem to me, unjustifiably applied, contrary to the Analogy of Faith, or the Current of sacred Writ. — May he and I remember and wisely apply those Scripture *Caveats* and *Prohibitions*, relating to diminishing from, or adding to the Words of God, Deut. 12. 32. Prov. 30, 5, 6. Rev. 22. 18, 19. — What must we then think of the Discourse under Examination ? in which the Author has arbitrarily interpreted the Words of his Text, in a Sense so inconsistent with the Scope of numerous parallel or similar Texts, both in the old and new Testament, a few whereof have been produced, and many more might easily be added. — It must be with a very ill Grace that our Author charges that on Expositors which they are not chargeable with, viz. *judging of Scripture-Doctrines from particular Scraps of Scripture*, in which our Author has signalized himself far beyond any I have met with. — But he goes on — “ And from the bare Jingle of Words, without attending to the general Drift and Design of the Author.” Now as to the particular Occasion of this his Censure upon them, their expounding his Text con-

trary to his Sentiments upon it, I would observe, that it being considered that the inspired *Author*, in his own and the Church's Name, made this Confession in a solemn Prayer to God, *All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags*; had this Gentleman in any Measure attended to the general Design and Drift of the Prayer, I think he could not easily have missed the true Scope and Meaning of this Confession, in particular: And had he attended to this, answerably to the Seriousness of the Subject, to the Sacredness of the solemn Assembly, to the Holiness of the Sabbath, and to the Solemnity of the Humiliation-Day in the preceding Week, to which he speaks of having some Reference, I presume, neither this *Gingle of Words* nor the *Scraps of Scripture* would have found a Place in his Discourse; and so his grave Audience had not been tempted to Levity by his using Phrases of so ludicrous a Sound, which run through his Performance in the several Parts of it. See *Pag.* 5, 9, 17, 23, 24, 25, 28, and elsewhere.— The *Indecorum* of this Language is further aggravated, as it was premeditated, it seems, to fix a Blemish on the *Expositors* he had in view, and to cast an Odium on their Character.— At best it seems like a great Piece of Vanity, for this young Gentleman to stake *his* Authority and Credit against the Judgment and Reputation of the whole Body of Protestant Expositors in general, both Ancient and Modern, whose Works (many of them) as well as Lives, testify for them, That in Fact they did attend very strictly and conscientiously to the Mind of the Spirit, to the true Scope of this, as well as other of the Scripture-Texts, and the general Drift of the inspired Penmen; especially in Regard to the peculiar Doctrines of Christianity, and more particularly that grand Article of *Justification by Faith*, which they saw so much Stress laid upon in the holy Scriptures; insomuch that both in Principle and Practice these pious and worthy Men renounced all *Self-Righteousness*, the Idol so much admired by many at this Day; —and in their Preaching never sought to gratify their Hearers with *Rabble-charming Sounds*, or with Flesh-pleasing

pleasing and great swelling Words of Vanity, such as we meet with in our Author's Discourse. For instance, "*God's choosing, not particular Persons, but whole Nations, and that only to Privileges in this Life, — moral Agency, (or Free-Will) — the new Nature of right Action, the royal Robe of personal Righteousness, — moral Virtue, the Basis and whole Superstructure of the Religion of JESUS, — The moral Rectitude of his Creatures, God's ultimate View, — moral Vertue, the supreme Dignity of GOD himself, — Preaching up moral Vertue, in the best Sense Preaching of CHRIST, &c. &c.*" — These are some of the Sounds we hear in our Author's Discourse. But the Expositors he so much condemns, never sought to tickle itching Ears, with Sounds so gratifying to *Flesh and Blood*, so pleasing to the Pride and Lusts of Men; they preached both the *Law & Gospel*, in their distinct Place & Order, & in such a Manner as tended to awaken secure Sinners by the dreadful Sound of the Curse denounced in the Law, and to win Souls to Christ by the joyful Sound of the Promise; proclaiming Christ *the Lord our Righteousness & Strength*; at the same Time perswading them which believed, to *continue in the Grace of God*, and to *adorn the Doctrine of God their Saviour in all Things*, by a Conversation becoming the Gospel. Accordingly we find, *Act. 2.42. They continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship.* — Now most surely in all this they followed the whole Current of Scripture-Doctrine, Precept, and Example, and were not led either by a *bare Gingle of Words*, or by mere *Scraps of Scripture*. But it will be found by an impartial Examination of our Author's Performance, that the heavy Reflections he has levelled at so many great and good Men, will fall upon himself with double Weight.

I have been the larger in Vindication of these Expositors and others against his general Reflections; because I look upon the *Truth* espoused by them, as struck at, and affronted in the Persons of it's Patrons and Professors. —

I now proceed,

2. To vindicate those Expositors and others against

our

our Author's Reflections and Misrepresentations with Regard to their Interpretations of the Words of his *Text* in particular, *All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags* — These are scattered thro' his whole Discourse; some have (I think) been taken Notice of already, and others will come under Consideration in the Course of this Essay. — I shall therefore at present only single out a Passage or two, in which either wilfully or ignorantly he has misrepresented them. — Thus when he is reporting the common Notion of the Prophet's Words, he tells us, (*Pa. 10.*) “The best Righteousness of the most improved Christians has been generally spoken of, as no better a *Qualification* (even according to the merciful Tenor of the Gospel) to appear before God with Acceptance, than *filthy Rags* are to dress and adorn the Body for a Visit to the King and Court on Earth.” But these Expositors and others, when they speak of personal Righteousness as *filthy Rags*, don't at all respect it under the Notion of a moral *Qualification* for future Happiness and final Acceptance; such constantly affirm the Necessity of inherent Righteousness, to make us (in the Gospel-Sense) *meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*: and yet they constantly and consistently renounce it as filthy Rags in Point of Justification before God, being utterly insufficient to answer the Demands of his Law, and procure us an Interest in his special Favour and Acceptance, therefore they conclude with the Apostle, *Rom. 5. 2* *We have Access by Faith into this Grace*, thro' Jesus Christ: they place their Title to divine Acceptance wholly in Christ's Law fulfilling Righteousness, made their's by Imputation on God's Part, and by a believing Acceptation, or receiving it by Faith, on the Believer's Part, which yet is not of themselves, but of the Grace of God enabling them thereto. Christ (partly) came to call Sinners to *Repentance*; such as are *weary and heavy laden* with Sin, he invites to come to him: such as have the Eyes of their Understanding enlightened to see and be convinced of their own Misery, and Inability to help or rescue themselves from the Force and

and Weight of the vindictive Justice of God, these and no others will fly to Christ, and lay hold of his Righteousness for Life and Salvation. The Expositors — ever rebuked the Spirit of the *Covenant of Works*, which makes Sinners imagine, it would be *Presumption* in them to come to Christ, unless they are to such or such a Degree *prepared*, or unless they can bring *something valuable* with them to recommend them to his Favour and Compassion, some laudable Contritions, Reformati^ons, and moral Vertues. For any to suppose that meer moral Vertue and Self-Righteousness will recommend them to the Favour of God, is no better than for some high-handed Malefactor or Traytor to pretend to approach the Court or Presence of his Prince without a Pardon first obtained. Divine Pardon is obtained by the Righteousness of Christ, and not our own ; because the Righteousness of the best Men living has so much of Imperfection and Pollution mixed with it, that Expositors and all others who duly consider the Case, must acknowledge with the Church by the Prophet in the Text, that *all our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags*. It must therefore be unreasonable, and I think, contrary to Scripture, for any to suppose, that such imperfect polluted sinful Creatures as the best of Men are in this Life, should obtain Favour with a just and holy God, *without* the perfect spotless Righteousness of Christ imputed, and as has been said *received by Faith* : This, according to Scripture, and in the Sense of these Expositors, is the only justifying Righteousness, “even according to the merciful Tenor of the Gospel.” Howbeit, at the same time they denied not, that where any have been *sanctified thro’ Faith which is in Christ*, and so in some Measure *have their Fruit unto Holiness*, God is well pleased herewith, and *accepts and rewards* it : yet not for it’s own Sake (it being very imperfect) but for Christ’s Sake ; and on the Account of his Righteousness : for in him only, as *Mediator between God and Man*, is God well-pleased, for in him the Rigour of the divine Law is taken away, and *not by Works of Righteousness which we have done or can do*. — This Gentleman’s asserting, that personal

sonal Righteousness hath been *generally* spoken of, as no better a *Qualification* in the spiritual Case, then *filthy Rags* are in the civil Case, This is a gross Misrepresentation of the *common Notion* of the Text, and tends both to mislead his unwary Readers, and disparage many sound Expositors, without any Colour of Reason.

But I proceed to take some Notice of another very exceptionable Passage; I think it an Imposition on his Readers, and a great Abuse upon these Expositors & others, to insinuate, as he does, *Pag. 25*—That they (absolutely speaking & without any Manner of Caution or Restriction) “ asperse moral Vertue as *nothing worth* in the Sight of God, no more than filthy Rags”! And that when “ exhorting others to the Practice of *Righteousness*,” they are nevertheless “ constantly telling them perhaps in the same Breath, that *all their Righteousness* when they “ have obtained it, will be NOTHING BUT *filthy Rags*.” This, I say, is a manifest Abuse; for no learned Calvinist Expositor or Preacher under the Sun, I presume, ever used such *irrespective* or unlimited and unguarded Language, as our Author here pretends: I may with the utmost Safety, I think, challenge him to produce so much as a single Instance. It appears to me a very groundless Reflection, if by *moral Vertue* he means true Gospel-Holiness, (in which Sense I think he can’t be understood, by the whole Scope of his Discourse before us)—However, let him name the Man that ever asserted it as *nothing worth* in the Sight of God, speaking absolutely and without any Limitation or particular Respect: Let him name the Man who was constantly telling the People, “ *All their Righteousness, when they have obtained it, will be nothing but filthy Rags,*” in every Sense, and in all Respects. And if he can’t, or won’t do this, what must we judge of his *Misrepresentation*, but that it is wilful? and therefore must stand as a designed Reproach, with all unprejudiced Judges; and such as is very much *aggravated* in the Circumstances of it, — delivered on the Lord’s Day, — Sermon-wise, — and level’d against many of his Fathers and Superiours; so is a Breach

of a variety of Commandments in the moral Law! — However, I would not forget to Note by the Way, that amidst all his Exclamations against these Expositors and Preachers, for *depreciating* moral Vertue, our Author has seen fit here to make a Concession in their Favour; (tho' it be done in an ill Manner, — with a View, as it plainly appears, to make them guilty of a *Self-Contradiction*,) — The Concession is implied in the Passage last refer'd to; which begins thus, — “ To speak freely, I never yet saw
 “ with what Face a Man can pretend to exhort others to
 “ the Practice of Righteousness, who is continually telling
 “ them — (the rest you had before) It seems then that however this Gentleman is incensed against those Calvinistical Ministers, he here appears willing to grant, that they don't neglect exhorting others to the *Practice of Righteousness*; and certainly it were the highest Injustice to the Memory of the Dead, and to the Character of the Living, not to allow them the Repute of their exhorting to the Practice of Righteousness: so that, for ought I see, they still preserve some little Kindness for *moral Vertue*, after all that is pretended about their *depreciating* it, even their Enemies themselves being Judges. — Indeed such as our Author intends thus to fault, don't *exhort to the Practice of Righteousness*, just in such a Manner as perhaps he & some others may, — as if they look'd upon Righteousness to be merely a *Habit*, acquired by repeated *Acts*: But are wont to exhort others as the Scriptures do, to *seek first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness*, to seek to God in earnest Prayer, accompanied with the diligent Use of the Means of Grace, that he would put his Spirit within them, and purify their Hearts by Faith, and implant in them a Principle of Righteousness, and enable them by Strength derived from Christ thro' *Faith* to work Righteousness, and to shew their Faith by good Works, and Acts of moral Virtue. — Tho' they lay out much of their Ministry, it's true, in exhibiting a Redeemer, and preaching Salvation by Grace thro' Faith in him; yet agreeable to the Charge given them *Tit. 3. 8.* one View they have in so constantly affirming
these

these Things, is, That they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good Works. —

However, I perceive our Author is stumbled at their Conduct; and the Mystery with him lies here,—that he does not know very well how to reconcile their *Exhortations to the Practice of Righteousness*, with their *Doctrine of Justification by imputed Righteousness*, or (which comes to the same Thing) with their telling People, that in Relation to that Affair, *All their Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags*: and he says upon it, as is before hinted, “I never saw *with what Face*,” they could thus *exhort & thus teach* at the same time. Doubtless he reckons it a very glaring *Contradiction*, and an odious *Inconsistency*, that requires a good Stock of Assurance in any to venture upon it. — But to speak freely also in my Turn, I note here, That it is not hard to discern what a *Face* our Author put on, when he gave himself such a Liberty, beyond all Bounds of Modesty, to cast (as doubtless he intended) Reproach on the Ministers and Preachers of the Gospel in general thro’ the Land, not only such as are surviving at this Day in their Charges, but those also that are gone to Rest in the several past Generations: For it is well known, that the Ministers, mostly, and I may venture to say, near to a Man, were in their Principles *Calvinistical*, as now they are distinguished; which Note of Distinction has but lately arose among us, occasioned very much by the late Growth and Discovery of *Arminianism*, which has now made it’s open and formidable Appearance in some of our Churches.

Our Author might perhaps offer this Flight of Reflection on so many eminent Ministers of Jesus Christ, as supposing it to add a Grace to his Discourse, and be the more taking with the unthinking Part of his Audience (and Readers) and all that are prejudiced in Favour of the Errors he had advanced.

But let that be as it will, this I am sure of, If I may be allowed to depend upon my Bible, which tells me it plainly, *That without Faith it is impossible to please God.* — If so, I
hope

hope I may be allowed to say, without being branded with the Imputation of a *Blasphemer* for *depreciating moral Vertue*, that whatever Pretences are made, to Religion, which are but meerly *moral*, the most refined Vertues, void of a saving *Faith* in Christ, and without his *imputed Righteousness*, will be but as *filthy Rags*,—and can give no more Title to final Justification in the Sight of God, than if a Man cut off a Dog's Neck, or offered Swines Blood in Sacrifice under the Law.

Our Author goes on in his Reflections upon these Expositors and Preachers. He represents them not only as telling People, that *all* their *Righteousnesses* are nothing but *filthy Rags*; but insinuates also, as if they were constantly telling them in the Words following, (*Pa.* 25) “God is already satisfied in all his Demands, his Law, his Honour, his rigorous relentless Justice, are all satisfied, and there is nothing left for Man to do, but to believe this undoubtingly, and—to rely upon it, that he is righteous, and shall finally be accepted as such.”—And then proceeds to say—“The Believer indeed may, if he please, out of meer Generosity, add Works of Righteousness; but really there is no Need of it; for his main Interest is secure without it.”—All this, our Author insinuates, is the Language of those Preachers, that believe and preach the Doctrine of Christ's *Satisfaction* and *particular Redemption*. But those that are thus free to offer their *magisterial Censures*, may do well to give heed to the Caution given, *Jam.* 3. 14, 15.—*Lie not against the Truth,—This Wisdom is not from above.*—Those Persons indeed that are prejudiced in their Minds against the Doctrine abovementioned, and other fundamental Doctrines of Christianity, may with this Gentleman *darken the Truth*—and put Things under very wrong & disadvantageous *Representations*; which can't be help'd that I know of: but for One that wears the Character of a Minister, thus to reproach the Doctrines of Christ, and the Professors of them, who have been & are the Glory of this Land and of our Churches, as Assertors of the Truth as it is in Christ Jesus,

Jesus, I think is hard to be accounted for ; especially when delivered in such a ludicrous Manner, tending to expose them to Ridicule & Contempt.— The Calvinists, against whom he designs his Reflections, distinguish between the *Purchase of Redemption*, by the atoning Blood of Christ, and the *Application of Redemption*, which is made by the sanctifying Grace of Christ : so that altho' Christ has already *satisfied* the Law and Justice of God, by what he did in his Estate of Humiliation ; yet that nothing further remains for him to do, in his Estate of Exaltation, is denied ; nor indeed can it be supposed, that there is nothing for Man to do, but to *believe this undoubtingly* :—For, the Faith of those our Author intends, is such as includes *Consent*, as well as Assent, and is a believing with the *Heart*, as well as with the *Head* : it is not merely a Speculative believing the Doctrine of Christ's Satisfaction, tho' ever so *undoubtedly* ; but implies an active *receiving the Atonement*, and *laying hold on the Hope set before us*, and committing our Souls into the Redeemer's Hand, to be justified by his Blood, and sanctified by his Spirit, and kept by his Power unto eternal Salvation : This they look upon to be *Faith* unfeigned, the Faith of God's Elect. But do they, by all this, *make void the Law thro' Faith* ? *God forbid ! yea, they establish the Law*. They don't think the Law cancelled by the Blood of Christ, in Point of preceptive Force, or Obligation as a *Rule of Obedience*, tho' they hold it to be so, in its penal Demands as a Covenant of Works : but assert the Believer's Obligation in Point of Duty, to be diligently following every good Work ; and don't imagine this to be left to human Choice, as a Matter of Indifferency, or *meer Generosity*, as our Author insinuates ; and they hold, that true *Faith*, wherever it is, will produce Obedience ; and exhort to Obedience, as the true Fruit of that Faith ; and they exhort Christians to be fruitful in good Works, that they may have Fruit abounding to their joyful Account at last : Yet caution Men, not at all to depend on their own personal Righteousness, but have their entire Dependance on Christ's

Christ's Righteousness imputed, as their only Title to Acceptance with God, and to esteem *all their own Righteousness to be, but as filthy Rags*, in Respect of Justification before God, as has been said, and not trust in it as any Recommendation of them to his pardoning and accepting Grace. — On the whole, I think, it sufficiently appears a very abusive Reflection this Author casts on those Ministers he points at in his Discourse, where he insinuates (*Pa. 24, 25.*) That according to their Notions of "*Revelation and Grace*," The most glorious Dispensation of the "*Gospel* is conceived of only as a *Scheme* calculated to "*allow Men the Practice of their Vices here, with Impunity hereafter.*" — That according to their Notion of his Text, "*Purity of Heart and Sanctity of Manners will be of no Service to Men* ; and consequently this must "*lead Men into an utter Contempt of those Things that are of infinite Importance for them to esteem & practise.*" Surely, says he, Men will never take [much Pains for "*that, which will be of no Service to them when they have got it.*" Here also, as in the other Parts of his Discourse, our Author too evidently aims at amusing the World, by blackening the Characters of faithful Ministers that pass under the *Calvinistic* Denomination, and thereby prejudicing the Minds of Men against the Doctrines they hold. For unless he or any others can prove from Scripture-Testimony or Reason, that *purity of Heart and sanctity of Manners* are comprized in meer *moral Vertue*, or Self-Righteousness ; — I say, unless this can be proved, the Argument can be of no Force. — But it is certain, that it is by Faith that the Heart is *purified*, thro' the Operation and Influence of the *holy Spirit*, and true *sanctity of Manners* proceeds from a Heart purified by this Faith, as the genuine Fruit and Effect of it. Now the short of the Argument, if I understand it, lies here — Either moral Vertue, i. e. a Man's own Self-Righteousness, will intitle him to Justification in the Sight of God, or it will not ; and that it will not, I suppose, is sufficiently proved by what has been already said on this

Head. Notwithstanding, true moral Vertues or good Works, are allowed by all sober Divines that I know of, to be good and profitable to Men, as well as honorary to God, and approved in Christ.— They are far from saying, that the Sanctity of regenerate Men will be of no Service to them : for *Godliness is profitable unto all Things, having Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come,* 1 Tim. 4. 8.—And *without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord,* Heb. 12. 14.—Now the *Godliness* and *Holiness* spoken of here, is wrought in the Heart and Life of the truly Regenerate by the powerful Agency of the Spirit of God and of Christ; which all the mere Morality in the World, in its most refined Acceptation, can never reach to the least Degree of.—But as something of this Kind has been spoken before, I shall proceed in the next Place,

3. To vindicate those Expositors and others, against some further Reflections and Misrepresentations of our Author, respecting sundry important *Points of Doctrine*, which are allied to the *common Notion of his Text*, and which he endeavours to expose to equal Ridicule.

It mayn't be amiss to premise here, that our Author has given us abundant Occasion to think of those Observations of his, *Pa. 22.*—“ The most rational and divine Scheme of Religion may become despicable in the Eyes of the World, by Misrepresentations : even Christianity itself, tho' capable of a rational Defence, well attested by external Evidence, and when viewed in it's native Purity and Simplicity, void of all corrupt Glosses and human Additions, carrying in it the clearest internal Marks of it's divine Original ; even this Religion, I say, may be so represented, as to render it ridiculous in the Opinion of sensible thinking Men.” — I am much mistaken if our Author has not furnished us with an Example of this in his own Discourse, which carries so much of *Misrepresentation* in it. I think, he has greatly *misrepresented* even *Christianity* itself, by his corrupt *Glosses* ; if not by human *Additions*, which seem too evident, yet at least by *Substractions*.—He apparently disowns some great and

and important *Doctrines* of the Gospel, under Colour of rejecting the “Fictions of weak and disordered Brains,” and because he “can never be brought to believe Things” “repugnant to the first Principles of Reason, and is therefore naturally led to conclude that no Scheme can be right, no Doctrine from GOD, that abates the Motives of Vertue, or discourages the Practice of any Duty.” Well ! But what is the *Scheme*, what are the *Doctrines*, he here has his Eye upon ? This we may learn from the Instances he has given us in the Introduction to his Discourse, Pa. 7 & 8.—Where having spoken concerning Expositors “judging of Scripture-Doctrines from particular Scraps of Scripture, and from a mere Jingle of Words,” he then proceeds to give a Specimen in several Particulars; by which it appears, it is the old Protestant Doctrines he strikes at, and endeavours to render them despicable in the Eyes of the World by *Misrepresentations*.

This may be considered in several of his Instances ; and

1. In the Doctrine of *Election*. His Words are, “Hence (i. e. by judging of Scripture-Doctrines from *Scraps* and *Gingles*, and for want of *Attention*—) “it has come to pass, that when Men read of God’s choosing whole *Nations* to certain Privileges, (and those in *this Life only*) they have rashly concluded, that particular *Persons* are unconditionally chosen to *eternal Life* hereafter.”—This is a manifest Contempt designed to be cast on the Doctrine of *Election*, and on all them that receive and profess it; and to harden Men’s Minds against it : — and therefore he proceeds to tax them of rashly drawing a Conclusion, in a Matter of Faith, respecting *Eternity* and the *Souls* of Men. If the Faith, professed by Protestants, of a *personal eternal Election of Grace*, were founded on such a *rash* Conclusion as this Author insinuates, the World is bound to give him Thanks for the Discovery he has made of so gross an Error ; but I suppose it will appear, that the Error is on his Side.—For *Election* is a pure Act of sovereign Grace laid in the secret and eternal Counsel of God ; and is therefore *unconditional*, as to Man, who then had no o-

ther *being* but what was in God's Mind and Purpose, in Time to bring into being.—But as the Design plainly is, to fasten a Reproach on this Doctrine of *Election*, by insinuating, that they that believe this, preach and teach, that if we are elected we have nothing to do, our Salvation is sure: — *But wilt thou know, O vain Man, that Faith without Works is dead?* He that has willed the End, wills also the Means leading to it; and so far as Holiness may be said to be Conditional of Happiness, as a necessary moral Disposition of the Subject, or in the Nature of a Means to the End, they are both included in the Idea, when Men are said to be *chosen to Salvation*; for *Sanctification*, is one Part of the Salvation they are chosen to.—The Reproach, which is intended against our holy Profession, we chuse to bear, rather than give heed to delusive Doctrines. We thank God, we have a more sure Word of Prophecy, to which we shall do well to take all diligent Heed; which will reflect greater and better Light, than is to be found in any of the best Productions, of fallible and uninspired Writers, not excepting the Discourse before us.—As to the particular Point now in View, I am perswaded, notwithstanding what this Gentleman has suggested, that every one who is in any Measure acquainted with the printed Labours of those who (by Way of Distinction) are called *Predestinarians*, knows, they do not, as our Author insinuates, ground their Opinion of an *eternal personal Election* merely on historical Passages in the Bibles relating to the Conduct of divine Providence towards Nations, tho' they are Gospeliz'd and in a Covenant-State, externally; but take their Principles from *doctrinal* Texts, which the Scripture abounds with, and which will admit of no other rational and consistent Sense. They find that the Scriptures, in setting forth the glorious Scheme of Man's Salvation by Jesus Christ, represent the Foundation of it as laid in the *eternal Purpose of Grace*, or the Counsel of God (as is before hinted) before the World was; and accordingly that they speak of the saved of the Lord as *from the Beginning chosen to Salvation*; as *chosen in Christ before the Foundation*

*Foundation of the World, that they should be holy, (not as being chosen upon the Prevision of any Thing of moral Virtue, in and from themselves, moving God to elect them, but from mere free Grace, with a View that they should be holy) and as in Time called according to his Purpose,—called by his Grace—according to his Purpose which he purposed in himself.—We are also told by the unerring Word of God, that as many as were ordained to eternal Life, believed : and as many as believed, are said to have believed thro' Grace ; all which are said to be kept by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation. And we are told, The Foundation of God standeth sure, having this Seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And these, tho' they are his, on the sure Foundation of his electing Love, yet are commanded to depart from Iniquity ; whether the omission of Duty, or commission of Sin. —For, as the Apostle states the Case, Rom. 8. 29, 30. (representing the whole in one connected View) Whom he did predestinate, them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. Here we have an inspired Writer drawing the admirable Plan of Man's Redemption : Where it is observable,—He first lays the Basis of it in *Predestination*, or eternal Election ; and then carries the Execution of it thro' sundry Gradations in Time, and at length compleats it in future everlasting *Glory* ; when the Top-Stone shall be brought forth with the Shoutings of *Grace ! Grace !*—This small Sketch of the Scripture-Proof commonly brought by Protestants, to support their Tenet respecting *personal eternal Election*, is enough to shew, that they are not *rash* in their Conclusion in the Point of Election : but that our Author rather appears rash in charging them as he does, in his fore-mentioned Insinuation, as tho' this Doctrine of the Election of Grace, and Faith in it, lay merely in some historical Passages of Scripture, referring to God's choosing whole Nations to certain Privileges, and those in *this Life only*. Here we find a farther Essay to prejudice People's Minds against this Doctrine, and a Proof also of the Author's denying it, without any Arguments to prove the contrary.*

So that the Rashness reflected on others, falls necessarily on himself.

He proceeds on the like Strain of Reflection, in a following Paragraph, *Pa.* 8. “ “ Some, and those not a few, “ are full of Hope in God ; because, as they *imagine*, he “ has from all *Eternity*, and that not only *without any Reason*, but, in direct *Opposition* to the very Nature & essential Constitution of his *moral Government*; set his *Love* “ upon them.”—The Doctrine of the *Decrees*, in common with every other Scripture-Doctrine, is liable to be abused to vile and pernicious Purposes ; and it’s readily granted, if a Man can give no other *Reason of the Hope that is in him*, but only that he imagines himself from all *Eternity chosen* to Salvation, such a Man has just Ground to fear, that he imagines a *vain Thing*, and that his Hope will make him ashamed.—The true Christian’s hope of *Election* is built not upon mere *Imagination*, but upon Scripture-Evidence of Sanctification, wrought in him by the Power of the *Holy Spirit*, together with his own Experience, that thro’ Grace, (and not by meer *moral Duties*) he is enabled more and more to die unto Sin, and live unto Righteousness.—If then we may lay Stress upon Scripture-Testimony with Respect to the Doctrine of the *Decrees*, and consequently, that of the *Election of Grace* ; the Insinuations of this Author, by way of Contempt thereon, are mere Amusements, and tend only to darken the Counsel of God ; which I shall endeavour to prove, from plain Scripture-Evidence ; and those that will not shut their Eyes against clear *Gospel-Light*, must, I think, own their Delusion, that plead the contrary. Let every one then diligently apply their Minds to the Scriptures above mentioned, and to such *Texts*, as I shall further produce. See Rom. 5. 8, 10. *God commendeth his Love towards us, in that while we were yet Sinners, Christ died for us.—When we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the Death of his Son.*—Were they not all *Sinners* and *Enemies*, for whom Christ died ? And was it not God’s *Love* to them that lay in the Bottom of all ? Was not this a Love ex-

isting

isting and operating, by way of *Benevolence*, in the Mind and Purpose of God, before Christ actually died for them? Yea, a Love which from the Beginning purposed their being reconciled to God by the Death of his Son? Are they not said to be redeemed by the precious Blood of Christ, *Who verily was fore-ordained before the Foundation of the World*, 1 Pet. 1. 20.—What other Date then could there be of God's selecting Love, which was the Spring of their Salvation by Christ, but from all *Eternity*? Surely God hath loved his chosen People from Everlasting,—and if *we love him*, it is *because he first loved us*, 1 Joh. 4. 19 — *He loved us while we were yet Enemies*. So that his first loving us was without any *Reason*, as there was no Motive on our Part, to engage his Love to us; and not only so, but it was in direct Opposition to the Letter of the Covenant of Works, that Law or Rule of Government, which God placed Man under originally, and to the Demands of his vindictive Justice, on his Transgression of it; yet the Wisdom of God contrived a wonderful Expedient for the Satisfaction of his violated Law and affronted Justice, in the Obedience and Sufferings of his own incarnate Son, who gave himself a Sacrifice for us; so that Sinners might reap the Benefit of *electing Love*, in a perfect Consistency with the Honour of his *moral Government*, without breaking in at all upon it's essential Constitution, or subverting its essential Designs: CHRIST having truly fulfilled all *Righteousness*, (agreeable to what we find, Eph. 3. 9,—11.) As his People's Surety, and being the *End of the Law for Righteousness unto every one that believeth*.—And all that are given to Christ by the Father, shall come unto him.—Who shall dare to call God's Sovereignty into Question? It plainly appears, that it is sovereign Grace, which ordained them that believe unto eternal Life. — *Therefore bath he Mercy on whom he will have Mercy*.—Observe how the Apostle silences all Cavils upon this Head, Rom. 9. 20. *Nay, but O Man, who art thou, that repliest against God!*—*Hath not the Potter Power over the Clay &c.* And hear what the Lord

Lord by a Voice from Heaven answered *Job*, Chap. 40. 2. — *Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty, instruct him ! He that reproveth God* (as, in any Case, upon the whole, either acting or purposing, not only without any Reason, but in direct Opposition to the Nature and essential Constitution of his moral Government) *let him answer it.* — Surely it well becomes us in every Case to revere & adore, rather than to contend and reprove. The Apostle has set us an Example, Rom. 11. 33, — 36. *O the Depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are his Judgments, & his Ways past finding out ! for who hath known the Mind of the Lord ? or who hath been his Counsellor ? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again ? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all Things : To whom be glory for ever. Amen.*

I proceed now to another of our Author's Reflections. 2. Another Instance he brings, of Expositors *rashly concluding* — respects the Doctrine of *original Sin*. — He thus states the Case, *Pa.* 7. “ That when they have laid “ before them the Character of a very loose and abandon- “ ed People, who by their own long *practised* Wickedness “ have rendered themselves the Children of Wrath, and “ fitted themselves for Destruction, — they are induced to “ vilify *human Nature* itself, with the same vicious Character.” — Here we have him insinuating again, as if Protestant *Expositors*, and such as join with them in the Point of *Original Sin*, had nothing to support or countenance their Opinion, but some Passages of *historical* Scripture grossly misapplied. He doubtless alludes to such Texts as these, *Gen.* 6. 5. *Psal.* 14. 1, — 3. *Eph.* 2. 1, — 3. — Which, I suppose, our Author would have considered only as spoken in Reference to the corrupt Condition of the Men of the *old World*; — the People of the *Jews* in some remarkable Season of epidemical prevailing Degeneracy, — and the Citizens of *Ephesus* in their heathen State : and I suppose, he would have these Texts interpreted as only describing them (respectively) from the actual Wickedness

edness of their Lives, and not at all implying any Account of what they were by native Disposition.

But as to the first Text—*Gen. 6. 5.*—I think, this Gentleman must see his Mistake in such a Thought, if he will only compare the above-named first Text with *Gen. 8. 21.*—where it is declared by God himself, who knows the Hearts of Men, their State and Dispositions, that they were the same in the *new World*, viz. after the Flood, as they were in the *Old* before it: for God pronounces upon all Men indefinitely, that the *Imagination of their Heart is Evil from their Youth, and continually so*, according to the natural Bent & Bias of the Mind. Now does God by this *vilify human Nature!* or do Expositors by believing what God has revealed Man to be by Nature, and teaching the Doctrine of *original Sin*, induce Men to *vilify human Nature?*—This Doctrine therefore is not received *rashly*, but upon *divine Testimony*. Let our Author then solemnly consider in the Fear of God, where his Reflection will at last terminate, unless he can prove the Case to be otherwise than it is here represented.

And as to the next Scripture mentioned above, *Psal. 14. 1,—3.* I desire this Gentleman to compare it with *Rom. 3. 10,—12.* where the Apostle *Paul* recites much of that Psalm, and applies it to *prove*, in Regard of *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, that *they are all under Sin*: And what can this Author's sharp Reflection on Expositors and others be, but a tacit Reflection on the inspired Writer himself, who in the like Way applied Texts, even as he was moved by the *Holy Ghost?*—And now as to the last mentioned Text, *Eph. 2. 1,—3.* It is plain that the Apostle did not design meerly to describe a State of *Heathenism*; but had in View the State of *Nature*, common to all Mankind.—For in his Description of the *Ephesians*, he not only speaks of *their Conversation in Times past*, but also points out the Source of their actual Wickedness, the *Lusts of the Flesh, and Desires of the Mind*; and accordingly declares it of them expressly, that they were *by Nature Children of Wrath, even as others*, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*.—Nay, it's worthy

of Observation, the Apostle not only mentions others indefinitely, but extends his Description *universally* unto all; and comprehends even *himself* in this whole Description; saying, *Among whom also WE ALL had OUR Conversation*,—in the *Lusts of OUR Flesh*—and *were* (we were) by *Nature Children of Wrath*, — *even when WE were dead in Sins* (x. 5—) — Like as the *Psalmist*, when repenting of actual Sin, runs up to the Fountain-Head and Original of all, a corrupt Nature. *Psal. 51. 5. Behold, I was shapen in Iniquity, and in Sin did my Mother conceive me.* Was this *David's* Case alone? No verily; we all, the whole Race of *Adam*, are, were, and shall be, *conceived* and *shapen* in like Manner.—For this we have also the Apostle's Testimony, tho' not in the same Words, but the like Meaning, in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, before noted; and in his Epistle to the *Romans* he does the same, yet more remarkably: for there he not only represents Sin as *Epidemical* and *Native*, but *Hereditary*; descending to *Adam's Posterity* throughout all *Generations* in Succession; pointing out the true *Origin* of this universal Corruption of *human Nature*, and resolving it into *Adam's Fall*.—He peremptorily and repeatedly asserts, *By ONE Man's Disobedience MANY were made Sinners.*—*By ONE Man Sin enter'd into the World, and Death by Sin.*—*Therefore by the Offence of ONE—Judgment came upon ALL Men to Condemnation.*—*Rom. 5. 12, 18, 19.*—Such Texts as these, plainly of a *doctrinal* Aspect, are the principal Scripture-Proofs, relied on to support the *Doctrine* of *original Sin*, as commonly received by Protestant Expositors.—And now it may be supposed, our Author will excuse the *Apostle* from the Imputation of *Weakness* and *Rashness* in his Conclusions: and under his Umbrage and *Authority* the poor Expositors—will (we hope) escape the hard Censures of this Author and others for the future,—for *vilifying human Nature it self*, as is pretended.

Many Things might be offered here for the further Confirmation of this weighty *scriptural Doctrine*; as, after what has been said, I may venture to call it. — But I shall

shall only add, That tho' *all have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God*, in one common Fall, yet there are some that by a wicked & profligate Life do indeed vilify *human Nature*, and make themselves more the *Children of Wrath*, than they were in their native State. — And tho' some are restrained by Grace, and others perhaps by the influence of a religious Education or otherwise, yet naturally all have in an evil Heart the *Seeds or Principles* of all that *Wickedness*, which is ever *practised* by the vilest and most abandoned Sinners under the Sun. So that in this Respect even *Infants*, in a State of Nature, are of a *vicious Character*, in the Sight of a holy and Heart-searching God; the very *same Character*, in Kind, with that of the most dissolute and hardened in Wickedness.

It is undoubted, that Christ is a Saviour to *Infants*, as well as others, and he is a Saviour only to *Sinners*.—Accordingly *all* that he *died for*, have this Character expressly ascribed to them in common. Rom. 5. 6, 8.—*Christ died for the Ungodly*—*While we were yet Sinners, Christ died for us*. And 1 Pet. 3. 18. *Christ also hath once suffered for Sins, the Just for the Unjust*.—So then, if *Infants* are included in the Number of them for whom *Christ died*, they are also included among those, who in the Account of Scripture sustain the Character of *Sinners, Ungodly, Unjust*.—And hence it appears, there is no *specific* (but only a *gradual*) Difference, between the moral *Character* of an unregenerate *Babe*, and that of a *Man* long inured to Wickedness. Else, for ought I see, the Practice of *Infant-Baptism* must be given up.—If our Author denies *original Sin*, in the Sense I have shewn, I apprehend it proper for *him* to join himself to the *Anabaptists*, or some other such Sect, as unworthy of Fellowship with the Churches here, or with the *established Church at Home*, according to their *primitive Profession* and Constitution.

3. The next Instance of our Author's Reflections on these Expositors, that I shall take Notice of, is what respects the Doctrine of *Efficacious Grace*.—His Words are these, "That when they hear of our being saved by Grace,

“ they conceive of it so as to *destroy all moral Agency*, and
 “ set themselves down with this vain Thought, that no-
 “ thing on their Part is necessary to Salvation, but if they
 “ are designed for it, they shall irresistably be driven into
 “ Heaven, whether they will, or not : And if they are
 “ not, no Prayers, or Endeavours will avail.”

The manifest Tendency (if not Design) of this Author's Discourse in this Place, and in other Parts of it, is, to render the essential Doctrines profess'd in these Churches generally, as odious in the Eyes of People as possible : And he here strikes at our Doctrine of Conversion, insinuating, that People are lead hereby to draw corrupt Conclusions, viz. That, if they are to be *saved by Grace*, then in Point of *Means* they have nothing required of them, but are excused from all Duties and Endeavours on their Part, and as he represents it, “ *If they are design'd for Heaven, they shall irresistably be driven into it, whether they will or not.*” We may observe, in what a scoffing and deriding Manner he treats the *holy* Things of God, and how he imposes on the Ignorant. This is the Fruit of his own *Invention*, however he may pretend to personate others in it, — and calculated exactly to the Genius of the *profane* and *irreligious* Part of Mankind. For I suppose, this Author or any other can't produce any single Instance, among such as are sober, religious and intelligent Christians (much less among learned Expositors and Preachers) holding this Doctrine I am speaking of, that will so much as think they have nothing at all to do : when they have so much Experience of the Remains of Corruption in them, through the *Depravity* of their *Natures*, that needs to be mortified and subdued, and therefore labour constantly, in the Use of God's appointed Means, to *work out their Salvation with Fear and Trembling* ; And know, that if ever they expect to have an *Entrance ministred to them into Heaven*, they must *use all Diligence to make their Calling and Election sure*, and follow *Holiness* with unceasing Desires and Endeavours to the last.

It is therefore but a meer Amusement and Reproach,

for

for him to charge as he does, the Expositors and others I am labouring to vindicate, & the Doctrines taught by them. There are indeed many poor inconsiderate Souls, among the unthinking Multitude, that are ready to apply this Doctrine to such a perverse Purpose. — For there are none of the Doctrines of *Revelation*, how plain, practical and important soever, but what have sometimes and by some evil disposed Persons been wretchedly abused; nay, none of the first Principles of *Reason*, but what have often been shamefully perverted. Yet shall these, and the Preachers and Professors of them, be reproached on this Account! — The Apostle *Paul* in his Day complained of some, that altho' the *Law* was *just* and *good*, yet they did not use it *lawfully*; and that they *perverted the Gospel of Christ*. — The Apostle *Peter* also complains of some, that they *wrested Paul's Epistles*, as also they did the *other Scriptures*, to their own Destruction. No wonder then, if in our Day of evident Declension, as we plainly find, there be some who even *destroy the Faith*, by their pretended *rational Schemes*. There is, I think, equal Force and Pertinence in the Apostle's Language and Arguing, Rom. 6. — *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in Sin, that Grace may abound? God forbid! — For ye are not under the Law, but under Grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the Law, but under Grace? God forbid!* It seems, the Apostle's Doctrine of *Grace* was incident to the same Abuse, and probably there were some in that Day who made just the same malignant, but impotent Cavils against the apostolical Doctrine of *Grace*, as our Author has done against the professed Calvinistical Doctrine of *Grace*, which is but one and the same; pretending, that "*it destroys all moral Agency.*" Now let this Gentleman try how he can fairly clear the Apostle's Doctrine from this Prejudice or Objection; which, I think, lies equally against both. — It seems by this Author, the Expositors or Ministers of the Word must never presume to talk of Persons being *saved by Grace, through Faith*, — lest some perversely disposed should construe it as a *destroying all moral Agency*, or

a teaching Men to neglect all Prayers and Endeavours and Concern in the Case. — I do not think, what this Author says in *Banter* on the Doctrine of Grace, worth any Notice, — only as he appears to ridicule that Doctrine of divine Revelation in *Eph.* 2. 4,—9.— Which I wish he himself, with all of the like Mind, may duly and more maturely meditate on, lest they fight against God, in denying the Truths he has delivered to us in the sacred *Oracles*.

None, that I know of, deny Man to have in his Nature the moral Faculty, called *Will*; or deny, in every Sense, it's Freedom in acting.—But then, we are to distinguish between *natural* Liberty, and spiritual. This latter is the *glorious Liberty* of the Sons of God, and peculiar to the Regenerate.—And this is that with which they are made free by Christ: this he refers to in those Sayings of his,—*Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.—If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed.* Joh. 8. 32, 36.— Otherwise, whatever *natural* Freedom Sinners may be possessed of, they are in Fact but *immoral* moral Agents; and whatever moral Agency may be boasted in their Case, I think, it is but moral Agency *falsely so called*: for indeed in the Exercise of their *natural Free-will*, they go on in the Indulgence of Sin voluntarily, & until they be saved by Grace, from the imperious Power of their own Lusts, they are all the while the *Servants of Sin*, and are in a scriptural Sense *moral Agents*, but in Contradistinction to Brutes, that have no Understanding, or Power of rational Choice; such therefore are termed *brutish*, who pervert the *Doctrine* of Christ, speaking *Evil of the Things they understand not*, 2. Pet. 2. 12.—*But what they know naturally, as brute Beasts, in those Things they corrupt themselves*, Jude 10.— And it is much more lamentable, when *Ministers* are thus corrupt in their Sentiments, and give themselves a Liberty to scoff at the Doctrines of Christ, when perhaps by Reason of their *unexperienced Youth*, or for want of a due Application of Thought, they are incapable of passing a right Judgment on Things of such a sublime & spiritual Nature.—

See the Complaint and Consequence summed up together. Jer. 10, 21. *The Pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the Lord; therefore they shall not prosper, and all their Flocks shall be scattered.* — It is only the efficacious Grace of God in Regeneration, that is the Spring from whence a genuine and true *moral Agency* flows. This is that which turns the natural Liberty of the human *Will* (which is essential to a *moral Agent*) into its proper Channel, directs it to its true Object and End, and carries it out in its right Manner of Exercise. By enlightening the Mind, and renewing the Will (in a Way not subversive of its essential natural Liberty) *Grace* works such a Change, that the Man that was before a *bad* moral Agent (as all Men are by *Nature*) becomes a *good* moral Agent. So that the Doctrine, that teaches, Men are *saved by Grace* only, does neither *vilify human Nature*, nor *destroy all moral Agency*, (as is suggested by this Author) but refines both, and makes them subserve, in the most desirable Manner, the *Glory of God*, for which End they were bestowed; and tends to keep Men from *glorying* in their natural Powers, yea even in their highest Attainments in *moral Virtue*. — What saith the Scripture in this Case? See Tit. 3. 5. — *Not by Works of Righteousness which we* (in a State of Nature, by any Principle of *moral Agency*, or Free-Will) *have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us, by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* — This Author tells us, Pag. 24, 25. That “ The Existence of God “ is not more certain than this, that it must be the *grand* “ *Design*, the *ultimate View* of God, in all his Dispensations, “ to promote the moral Rectitude and Happiness of his “ *Creatures.*” — The strong Terms in which *He* here delivers himself, may possibly be Matter of Amusement to the unthinking Part of Mankind; but I suppose, it will make but little Impression on the Minds of such as are able in some Degree to determine, wherein Man’s moral Rectitude and Happiness consists. I have before noted, *That it is not by Works of Righteousness we have done, or can do, that we are saved* (according to the inspired Apostle) but
by

by the *renewing* Work of the *Spirit of Grace* ; which gives a Man true *moral Rectitude*, both of Mind and Action, and leads him to his highest Happiness : And hence the *ultimate View* of God, in the Dispensation of temporal and spiritual Blessings to his Creatures, is *the Praise of the glory of his own Grace* ; and not as this Author insinuates, as if the blessed God, in dispensing his Benefits to Men, universally took his Measures from their *moral Agency* ; when we are plainly taught, the grand *Rule* of God's Dispensations, particularly in the Point of *converting* Grace, which all saving Benefits depend upon, is *according to the good Pleasure of his Will*.

Nevertheless, this Doctrine of *efficacious Grace* has not the least Tendency to dispirit Men's *Endeavours* after Purity of Manners, nor does it administer a just Occasion to any, as is insinuated, to "set themselves down" [i. e. in Sloth and Security] "with this vain Thought, that *No-thing* on their Part is necessary to Salvation." — By what *Objections* there follow, — according to this Author's Manner of aspersing the Doctrine of sovereign Grace, and all in general that profess and teach it, — and by all that is offered by this Author under the Head we have been considering, he has only shewn us, that he knows how *Ludere cum Sacris*, to mock and scoff, like those who (notwithstanding their *moral Agency*) will not *endure sound Doctrine*. — However, I think, this Gentleman's abusive Representation of the Doctrine of *Grace*, held by the Expositors he aims at, and his setting it forth in such Language of *Flout* and *Disdain*, does sufficiently prove *his Contempt* for the Protestant Doctrine of *Grace*, tho' so evidently founded on Scripture, the Rule of Faith and Standard of Orthodoxy.

4. Another of this Author's Reflections on these Expositors & others, is in Relation to the Doctrine of the *Saints final Perseverance*. His Words are (*Pag. 7.*) "When they
 " meditate on the constant unchangeable Affection God
 " bears to *good Men*, they make this groundless Inference,
 " from his Unchangeableness, that they are unchangeable
 " also." — This is but a groundless Reflection. Does their

their Doctrine thus indeed *deify the Creature* ! No verily, they are far from any such Supposition, or Imagination, as if the *Saints* were *unchangeable*, like God himself : They are far from imagining them unchangeable, absolutely, in themselves. But what they assert, is, that according to the Tenor of divine Revelation, the spiritual *State* of good Men is unalterably safe ; in this Respect, that God will never permit them to fall *totally* and *finally* from Grace. They know, that in themselves they are changeable Creatures, and if left to themselves, they shou'd soon *fall from their own Stedfastness* ; but they know withal, that those *whom God loves, he loves to the End*. — And tho' they frequently fall into Sin, God proves his unchangeable *Love*, in their Recovery ; — renewing them to Repentance, and exciting fresh Acts of unfeigned Faith in Christ, and Trust in God's Promise, that he *will never leave nor forsake them*, as in *Josh. 1. 5*. Nor do they dare to depend on God's Promises, without pleading them at the Throne of Grace, with Instancy in Prayer, with Humility of Soul, and with Endeavours to become more watchful over themselves and against Sin for the future. — Christ in his mediatory Prayer, *Joh. 17. 24*. saith, *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am*. And him the Father beareth always. *Joh. 11. 42*. As sure then as Christ *ever liveth to make Intercession* for them, so sure is the final Perseverance of *as many as the Father hath given him*. — In a Word, the Immutability of God's Love and Faithfulness, who hath promised everlasting Life to sincere Believers, gives them abundant Security, that they shall not fail of the Grace of God, or come short of the Glory of God at last. See *Rom. 8. latter End*. — And Abundance more might here be offered from Scripture to the like Purpose ; which may be seen, if the Reader will give himself Leisure to turn to these Texts, among others. *2 Thess. 3. 3*. — *Joh. 13. 1*. — *Rom. 11. 29*. —

5. Another Reflection our Author has, respects the Doctrine of *imputed Righteousness*. — He mentions it under the Head of *Delusions*, in Men's judging of their spiritual

State, in these Words. (*Pag. 8.*) “ Others you will find
 “ amusing themselves with a vain and groundless (how-
 “ ever, no Matter since it is a strong) Perswasion, that
 “ there is *no Need* of their being *Righteous* themselves,
 “ because they have the perfect Righteousness of CHRIST
 “ *imputed* to them.” — To this I shall only say, that it
 appears but only a more covert Way of disparaging the
 Doctrine it self, under Colour of exploding a *delusive Con-*
sequence, supposed to be drawn from it. — And I view in
 the same Light that Saying of his in *Pag. 21.* Where
 speaking of *moral Vertue*, he observes, that “ without it,
 “ a Man could not be so well on’t in Heaven, as on Earth,
 “ tho’ he had the Righteousness of every other Being in
 “ the Universe *imputed* to him.” — Can any one rationally
 suppose, that there is any other Righteousness capable to
 be *imputed* to him, but *Christ’s*? And does this Author
 no more believe *Christ’s* Righteousness *imputed* to Believers,
 than he does the Righteousness, in common, of *every other*
 (or any other) *Being in the Universe*! — Here this Author
 has, it seems, given us his Opinion, about the Matter of
 our *justifying Righteousness*; and it appears, that *Christ’s*
 Righteousness is but of little or no Account with him,
 at least in that View; but an inherent Righteousness, i. e.
moral Vertue, seems to be all in all with him. — I may
 here allude to *his* Way of Reasoning in *Pag. 26.* and argue
 upon the Doctrine of *imputed Righteousness* in his Manner,
 with some Alteration of his Words. “ The Truth of the Case
 is this: Either *imputed* Righteousness is of some Use and
 Significancy in the Affair of our Salvation, or it is not:
 Either it has some Connection with and Influence on our
 Happiness, or it is of no real Necessity to us. If the *Lat-*
ter, then there is not one Word to be said in Favour of it;
 but the greatest Self-Justiciaries, yea, the most blasphemous
 Deriders of imputed Righteousness, may be the best Friends
 to Christianity, and those that are most righteous in their
 own Eyes may be the highest in the Grace of God. —
 But if the *Former*, then ’tis a sure Thing, that in Proportion
 to it’s real Worth and relative Advantage, arises the
 Folly

Folly of those who neglect it, and the Strength of all our Arguments to recommend it to Mankind." — I shall only add, there's no such Thing existent among Men as true *moral Righteousness*, but what owes it's Original to the *Righteousness which is of Faith*; to the *Righteousness of CHRIST*, as the procuring Cause, and to *Faith*, as the special Means, under the Influence of the divine Sanctifier. — For we are *sanctified by Faith which is in Christ*. Acts 26. 18. And Faith in Christ eyes his *Righteousness*, or *Obedience to the Death*, as it's special Object. Rom. 3. 25. — Chap. 10. 3. 4. For they — (i. e. the Israelites, as *x. 1.* and with them may be join'd all that trust to their *moral Virtue* for *Justification*; they) being ignorant of God's *Righteousness*, and going about to establish their own *Righteousness*, have not submitted themselves unto the *Righteousness of God*. — For Christ is the End of the Law for *Righteousness* to every one that believeth. — To the same Purpose is that, Phil. 3. 9. And be found in him, not having mine own *Righteousness which is of the Law*, (viz. *moral Virtue*) but that which is through the *Faith of Christ*, the *Righteousness which is of God by Faith*. — Act. 5. 29. We ought to obey God, rather than Men: And especially such as scoff at the Doctrines of Christ. The Apostle saith (1 Job. 5. 9, 10.) If we receive the Witness of Men, the Witness of God is greater. — He that believeth not God, hath made him a Liar; because he believeth not the Record that God gave of his Son — Who is declared to be LORD our RIGHTEOUSNESS; and by Faith in his *Righteousness* we are justified, and do glory: But not in meer *moral Virtue*; for to glory in this, is to glory after the *Flesh*, and not after the *Spirit*; 'tis to glory in a Thing of nought.

The next Thing I shall take Notice of, is that Reflection this Gentleman casts on the *Protestant Religion*, professed by faithful *Expositors*, and *Preachers* of the Gospel, with others, from the Reformation, particularly in *New-England*. — He reflects in this Manner, (Pag. 7.) " Thus " stupified and bewildered with Sounds, without attend- " ing to the true Sense of Revelation, the pure & perfect

“ Religion of Jesus, — is in many Places turned into
 “ an idle Speculation, a mysterious Faith, a senseless Super-
 “ stition, and a groundless Recumbency : and in short, every
 “ Thing but what in Fact it is.” — If the Case be so as is
 here represented, then *our FATHERS, where are they ?* Have
 they been such *blind Guides ?* God forbid ! We hope and
 believe better Things of them than are here reported,
 as they made the Word of God their Rule. And it were
 well, if some among us had followed *their Example* ; and
 if our Author particularly had done so, for the Good of
 that *Church* and People he stands in a particular Relation
 to. — He also adds, — “ The pure and perfect Religion
 “ of JESUS, (which contains the most refined System of
 “ *Morality* the World was ever blessed with ;” —) None
 that I know of, will deny, that *the Religion of Jesus*
 is *pure and perfect*, or that it *contains the most refined System*
of Morality, incomparably excelling the best *Pagan Phi-*
losophers Systems, and even those of the best uninspired
Jewish Doctors. — The moral Law is delivered to us in
 the sacred Scriptures with the greatest Perfection and Pu-
 rity ; and is there considered as of immutable and eternal
 Obligation. Our Saviour therefore declares, that it was
 not the End of his coming (as some might vainly imagine)
to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it, Matth. 5. 17. — i. e.
to fulfill the Law, in the Capacity of his People’s Surety,
 for the Ends of making Satisfaction to divine Justice, and
 providing a justifying Righteousness for them, as well as
 to teach them the true Meaning of the *Law*, and set them
 an Example of Obedience for their Imitation. And tho’
 none are able to *fulfill all Righteousness*, as he did ; yet *as*
many as the Father hath given him, are predestinated to be
conformed to the Image of the Son of God : Therefore *we*
 should be, in our Measure, *in the World, as he was in the*
World ; and should *walk, even as he walked*, who was the
 most illustrious Pattern of good Works, and followed ex-
 actly the Rules of true *Morality*. But for any to pretend, as
 this Author insinuates, that Christ came only to *settle, a*
System of Morality, and that this he *taught principally*, when
 he

he was in the World, tends to cast great Dishonour on Christ, and to turn the true Christian Religion into a meer Scheme of *Morality*, which favours much more of *Paganism*, than what Christ and his Apostles have taught us.— Therefore the Suggestion is to be rejected with Contempt and Defiance, as destructive to the great Ends of Christ's coming, and inglorious to that wonderful Work he has done for the *Salvation* of Souls: for which Saints *do now*, and *for ever will* adore and magnify the Riches of divine free sovereign Grace through JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.

However, notwithstanding all this, I wou'd by no Means be understood as designing to shut true *Morality* out of the Religion of *Jesus*, as tho' it had no proper Place there. For indeed we can never *do Righteousness*, without *Morality*; nor can we *shew our Faith* in Christ, as we ought, without *Works*; nor have we sufficient Evidence of our vital Union to him, without a constant Care of Conformity to him in all the Instances of moral Duty. If this be wanting, it's a Sign, that our Faith is *dead*, and our Religion *vain*: So our own Hearts will condemn us, and can never witness for us that we have *Faith unfeigned*. Nor can others, without *beholding our good Conversation in Christ*, have sufficient Grounds of a rational Charity for us, that we are sincere in the Profession of the Religion of *Jesus*, and have felt the Power of it in our Souls.— But after all that has been, or ever can be said in Favour of *Morality*, this Author's Insinuation (that the *pure and perfect Religion of Jesus* consists only or principally in this refined System of *Morality*) is groundless, and founded on meer *Arminian* Presumption: for neither Scripture nor Reason is produced, to prove this Assertion of his; nor indeed can be by any other: And I hope, none are so stupidly blind, as to go away satisfied with an *Ipse dixit*.

Before I come to the next general Head of Remarks, I shall take a little further Notice of this Author's Reflection on the Religion mostly profess'd in these *New-England* Churches, and by the Ministers in them, that we apprehend to be *sound in the Faith which is in Christ Jesus*.

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He terms (as was before noted) the Religion of the Land, “an idle Speculation, a mysterious Faith, a senseless Superstition, and a groundless Recumbency.”—But pray, Sir, why must it be branded with such hard and reproachful Names; as if our Faith, and the Doctrines we profess, were not according to Scripture; but founded on meer chimerical delusive Imaginations? This seems to be done with a Design to turn the Minds of People from *the Truth as it is in Jesus*: And if so, they must believe a Lie. For all such as turn away from *the Truth*, will fall under the Charge of *Falshood*, in a less or a greater Degree. And I suppose, if our Author had duely consulted the Rules of his so much applauded *Morality*, he wou’d have found no Room for such abusive Invectives against us, whatever deep rooted Prejudice he may be under against the *Faith* we profess.

This Author insinuates, on the other Hand, that his refined System of *Morality* is “a Doctrine of Sobriety, Righteousness, and Piety.” But, *moral Piety*, *Sobriety* and *Righteousness*, are these the only Lessons to be learned of *Christianity*! Are they so much as the first Principles of the *Doctrine of CHRIST*! Was not the *Doctrine of Plato*, *Socrates*, *Cicero*, *Seneca* and other moral Philosophers in the *Pagan World*, a *Doctrine of Sobriety, Righteousness & Piety*? These *Heathen Philosophers*, taught they not the very same Scheme as this, in Sum and Substance? Only, it seems, *their* *Ethicks*, or Systems of moral Philosophy, were not so refin’d, so pure, and perfect. Truly this Discourse of our Author’s seems to be one incessant Cry in Praise of his idolized *Morality*; not altogether unlike that of the tumultuous Rout at *Ephesus*, “Great is *Diana* of the *Ephesians*!”

Thus I have gone through what I propos’d under the second general Head of Remarks, and have insisted the longer from the Importance of the Points in Debate.

The next Thing, in the order at first projected, is,

III. To consider *the Danger of substituting a Righteousness of our own in the Room of Christ’s Righteousness, with Relation to the Affair of our Justification before God*; and how

how far our *Author* stands justly chargeable with (Doctrinally) *substituting* personal *Righteousness* in the Room of *imputed* Righteousness.

It is evident, that the whole Tenor and Scope of this Author's Discourse we are upon, is, to disparage, and draw in as dark Colours as possible, the Doctrines we profess, and indeed the whole of our Religion, tho' founded on the plain and unerring *Authority of divine Revelation*. To that End he brings it under the Odium of "an idle Speculation,— and a groundless Recumbancy." Which Passages have already had some Notice taken of them, and may perhaps fall under a further Consideration in the following Remarks.

The constructive Language of his Discourse, from the Beginning to the End, is, ' You have no Need at all to go beyond or without your selves for a Righteousness to justify you before God.'— Else, whence is it, that he casts so much Obloquy upon Expositors and others, that put a Sense on his Text different from the Notion he has taken up of it? Why is he so cautious of speaking any Thing in Favour of the Doctrine of *imputed* Righteousness? He is so far from this, that the whole Construction of his Discourse is rather calculated in full *Opposition* to this *Protestant* Doctrine: And numerous Passages in it, I apprehend, are most plainly of an unfavourable Aspect. I will instance in a few, for a Specimen; and make some Remarks upon them. Thus, in proposing the Point that he undertakes to demonstrate (Pag. 11th of his Discourse) he expressly professes to maintain, " That neither *All* nor any of our Righteousness, when true and genuine, sincere and universal, can possibly, consistent with Reason, Revelation, and even so much as common Sense, deserve this odious Character of *filthy Rags*."— This Gentleman here, as in the other Parts of his Discourse, seems to deliver himself in unusual Phrases, and a Manner of Expression which carries much of Ambiguity in it, tending rather to amuse, than instruct People in general; without any Explanation of his Meaning, for the most Part; and destitute of Scrip-
ture-

ture-Proof, as before hinted. However, I observe, this Author appears by the *Epithets* he has heaped up, to aim at expressing to us, what he calls (Pag. 15) “The most *compleat* Character of *Spotless Vertue*.”—Now the Question is, Whether there is, or ever was, such a *compleat* Character of *spotless Vertue*, existent under the Sun; unless in the Case of the Holy Jesus, and of our first Parents before the Fall? And it’s readily granted, that the *Righteousnesses* in these two Cases are exempt: But among all the natural Race of apostate *Adam*, where was there at any Time, or in any Instance, found a *compleat Character of spotless Vertue*? What saith the Scripture? *There is not a just Man upon Earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.* Eccl. 7. 20. Now so far as the just Man *sinneth*, he certainly stains his moral *Character*, and detracts from his personal *Righteousness*, or Conformity to the *Law* of God, the Rule of Righteousness; which, as it demands *Perfection* of Obedience, can never in Reason be supposed to take up satisfied with an *imperfect* and *spotted* Obedience. Therefore such an Obedience as is stained with *Sin*, can never be supposed available to *justify* us, in a due Process of *Law*; one *Yot* or *Tittle* of which God will not *suffer to pass away*. Consequently we must conclude, that in Relation to our being justified before God, against the Challenges of his holy and indispensable *Law*, verily *all our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags*.—It is a Matter worthy of strict Notice, that when we apply this diminutive Character of *filthy Rags* to personal *Righteousness*, it is considered as viewed existing in it’s *Subject*, a morally imperfect Creature, and with Respect to the grand Affair of *Justification* before God. In this Regard, I think, *all the Righteousnesses* of “the most improved Christians” may be fitly compared to *filthy Rags* (whatever this Author or any others may suggest to the contrary) without the least Inconsistency, either with *Reason*, *Revelation*, or *common Sense*. For (as was before shewn) it is Men’s *moral Vertues* and *personal Righteousnesses* being so highly applauded, and placed in the Room of the *imputed Righteousness* of Christ, that is here and by every

one ought to be condemned, as erroneous and corrupt, whatever plausible Pretensions may be insinuated, to blind Men's Minds, and pervert their Judgments.— It is the plain, direct, and infallible *Gospel-Rule*, that the Faith of *Confessors* to the *Truth*, in this and other Lands, is built on : And this, I pray God, we may continue to adhere to, and defend, in Opposition to and open Defiance of all that either the Art of Man, or Powers below, can suggest with Respect to the *Vertues of Morality* or a personal Righteousness being a fit or sufficient Intitlement to Acceptance in the Sight of God, either here in our Acts of religious *Worship*, or hereafter in giving our Account at the Tribunal of Jesus Christ. The Scripture is plain, and I think, indisputable, That *without Faith it is impossible to please God.* For he that cometh to God, with Acceptance, must believe. Heb. 11. 6.— God imputeth Righteousness without Works. See Rom. 4. 6.

But again, this Author asserts, *Pag. 15.* “ From the Beginning of the Bible to the End of it, you will never find any the *least* & most *imperfect* Degrees of real Goodness branded with any such odious Character.” To which I answer, Perhaps our Author will own, that *Saul* when he was a Pharisee, had some Degree of real Goodness in him, being as touching the Righteousness which is in the Law, blameless: Yet *Paul* the Apostle throws Disgrace on all his former Jewish Religion, as comparatively *but Loss & Dung*, Phil. 3. 8. His moral Goodness, which was really good in it's Kind and Degree, yet he casts Contempt upon it, in Compare with Christ's Righteousness imputed to him, that *Royal Robe* with which he was then adorned.— And if Multitudes of *Protestants*, *Expositors* and others, have not been strangely deceived, this same Scripture furnishes me with an undeniable Instance to my present Purpose ; and may be very justly (as it frequently has been) parallel'd with our Author's Text, taken according to the commonly received meaning. *Paul*, now a Christian and an Apostle, cured of his Pharisaical Dependence on his *moral Vertues*, says there concerning *all Things*, including his

moral Attainments, present, as well as past, *I do count them but Dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own Righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is thro' the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith.* So we see the Apostle did not dare to approach the Presence of his final Judge, arrayed only with the self-pleasing Habit of his *moral Vertues*, the *Dung-hill-Garment* or *filthy Rags* of his own Righteousness ; but with the rich and recommending Attire of *Christ's Righteousness*, the *Righteousness which is of God by Faith.*

Agreeable to the Drift of our Author's Discourse, I find him peremptorily asserting, *Pag. 20.* “ It is the Righteousness of the Saints” [meaning *their own moral Righteousness*, which he insists on all along] “ *that renders them amiable in God's Sight, that is the Condition of all his Favours to them, and the sole Rule he will proceed by in judging them, and dispensing eternal Rewards to them.* The Scriptures (says he) join with the *natural Notions* of our own Minds in all this, in the most plain and exprefs Language imaginable.”— To which I say,— It is very probable, as all Men since the Fall are by Nature Men of *corrupt Minds*, that the *natural Notions* of such Minds may concur with our Author in all this ; and strongly conceit, that their own personal Righteousness “ renders them amiable in God's Sight,” and powerfully attracts his kind Regards to them ; *that this is “ the Condition of all his Favours to them,”* &c.

But I think, enough has been said to confute such a dangerous Error ; and establish our Souls in the contrary weighty-Truth, that it is *the Righteousness of Faith*, and not our own moral Vertue, which renders us *amiable* in the Sight of God, according to Scripture and sound Reason.— That which renders acceptable in his Sight, is the Righteousness of God our Saviour, which is *upon all them that believe*, i. e. with *Faith unfeigned* ; and the Scripture calls it *precious Faith* : And surely it is in God's Account so, especially as it pays peculiar Honour to his *dear Son*, and is the Means by his special Appointment to invest us with *Christ's Righteousness*

teousness, which covers our moral Nakedness from the Sight of his vindictive Justice (See *Rev. 3. 18.*) and indeed renders us pleasing Spectacles in the pure Eyes of his rectoral Holiness.—*Not by Works of Righteousness which we have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us, by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, &c. Tit. 3. 5.—7.* Here, we may observe, God's planting the vital Principle of Holiness in us, or purifying our Hearts by Faith (as well as his justifying us thro' Faith) is represented as an Act of his sovereign *Grace and Mercy*; independent of any antecedent moral Condition on our Part; not at all respecting *Works of Righteousness which we have done*, and having no other Rule to direct it but *his own Purpose and Grace*, which (as it is express'd, *2 Tim. 1. 9.*) *was given us in Christ Jesus before the World began.*—In short, by the whole Tenor of Scripture-Language, it appears, that *Justification* (as well as Sanctification) is a present Benefit, actually existent in this Life, beginning with our very first becoming *Believers*, and not delayed 'till *Works of Righteousness* be done by us to procure it, much less adjourned to the *Day of Judgment*, as some pretend.

What this Author offers, to support his Scheme of Salvation by *moral Vertue* from *Psal. 18. 23. I was upright before him — Therefore hath the Lord rewarded me according to my Righteousness:*— This, I think, is foreign from his Purpose, and therefore will in no Way answer the Design he is upon. For it's probable, the Psalmist in these Passages, as well as in many other of the Psalms he penned, speaks not of *himself* personally, but prophetically and typically of the MESSIAH; who indeed acted in all that he did, in the Perfection of *Uprightness* or *Righteousness*, and therefore has an indisputable Right to plead the Merit of it.—Otherwise, *David* must be necessarily charged (at least) with gross *Inconsistency*, or rather the *Holy Spirit*, by whom he spake; which would amount to such a Degree of *Blasphemy*, as this Author doubtless is very unwilling to fall under the Imputation of, however freely he has charged it upon Expositors and others, in a Matter of much smaller

Consequence. To demonstrate that *David* spake not this of himself, but of CHRIST, and to clear him of *Inconsistency*, we need only turn our Eye to 2 Sam. 23. 2. Where he makes that Declaration, *The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his Word was in my Tongue.* Now, as he was before under the immediate Influence of the Spirit, so here also; where (it's observable) he disclaims pleading the Dignity of his own Righteousness; but flies to the Covenant God had made with him, as in v. 5. In which he must unavoidably have a direct Eye to, & Faith in *Christ* and his Righteousness; on which, it is evident, he placed all his Hopes: For he saith, *Although my House be not so with God* (and as it follows by Way of Repetition in the close of the Verse, *Although he make it not to grow*) yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, — *This is all my Salvation, and all my Desire.* And, as he elsewhere expresses it, on the like Occasion, *What can David say more?* — This shews us, that it was not his Uprightness, or his own Righteousness, that he depended on, as the Ground or Reason of God's bestowing his Rewards on him, or any other of his Saints, but he only looked herefor for the Sake of CHRIST and his Righteousness. And in the same Manner *Paul* expresses himself, — *That I may be found in Him, not having my own Righteousness.* — The Righteousness of CHRIST, and not moral Vertue (as I have had Occasion frequently to mention) is that whereby true Believers will at last be found of their Judge in Peace, and be presented faultless before the Throne of his Glory with exceeding Joy. — Many other plain Texts might be produced to confute this Author's wild and dangerous Assertions, and Attempts to bring the whole of Religion and Happiness under the Head of moral Vertue, and thrust out the Righteousness of Christ, and the Grace of the Spirit, as unnecessary in the Scheme of our Salvation; which is evident from what he says, Pag. 7. "*Revelation*" every where considers us as moral Agents, and suspends our whole Happiness upon our personal good Behaviour, and patient Continuance in Ways of well-doing." — We have here a farther Proof of this Gentleman's Dependence

on *moral Virtue*, as if it were the *All* of Religion; there is nothing all this While in his Discourse; so far as I have already considered it, to be found of the *Essentials* of the true Gospel-Religion; not one Word of *Regeneration*, or the Necessity of *being born again*; as our Saviour has taught us, nothing of *Faith* and *Repentance* (till near the close of his Discourse, where by a seeming meer accident it was once thought of by him) nothing of *Union* to CHRIST, nor of *Communion* with Christ &c. These Things were all, as it seems, aliene to his Purpose. But surely; these, & such like Things; are by the Tenor of *Scripture-Revelation* requisite, and leading to our final Happiness. The Case is not as this Author asserts, that “Revelation suspends the whole” of our Happiness on our *personal* good Behaviour.” This indeed is necessary in a Professor of Christianity: but to say, or pretend, that the Scripture or “Revelation every where suspends the whole of our Happiness on our *personal* good Behaviour,” as this Author does, is a perverting the Scripture. In Truth, *the personal good Behaviour*, mention’d by him, appears by the whole Tenor of this Discourse of his, from first to last, to be little more than what the *Heathen* have profess’d and built their Hopes on: but without *Faith*, these Duties of Morality reach no higher than what Persons may and do often arrive to by the common Helps of Nature. And tho’ when done in Faith, they are good in their Place, and strictly to be pursued by all that profess Christianity, is undeniable; yet when *depended* on, they will be found to be a meer Delusion, if I know any Thing of the Meaning of the Scriptures, or the Mind of God in them. In short therefore, unless the Mercy of God through a Mediator be extended to us for our Salvation, and relied on by Faith, we must inevitably perish with the fallen *Angels*, notwithstanding all our Duties, & notwithstanding the concurrent Help of all meer created Causes.—As to the Scriptures considering Men as *moral Agents*, I suppose, it must be granted, that the *Angels which sinned*, do still retain those natural Powers, which originally constituted them *moral Agents*;

Agents ; tho' under an irreversibile Doom, without a Redeemer : and the like, I suppose, may be said of the *Spirits in Prison*, the lost Souls of Men, passed out of a State of Trial, into a State of Retribution, that they are still *moral Agents*. But to what Purpose is all this? Man's *moral Agency*, as he is under the Power of Sin by Nature, through the Fall, is a *moral Agency* only free to *moral Evil*, and not to that which is spiritually *Good*. — The *Spirit that is in us naturally lusteth to Envy*, and to that which is Evil. And *Paul* declares that *in him, that is, in his Flesh, dwelt no good Thing*. Rom. 7. 18. — According to our Author's Scheme of Divinity (or rather, I think, Heathen Morality) he tells us, *Pag. 21.* “ It is Demonstration, that the *Foundation* of “ final Happiness must be laid in every one's own Mind, “ in a personal good Turn, and rightness of Temper to relish “ celestial Joys.” — Truly it is Demonstration sufficient, I think, that it is but a meer Amusement, to tell of “ a “ personal good Turn or rightness of Temper to relish “ celestial Joys,” without previous *Conversion*, and some good Degree of a saving and experimental Acquaintance with divine Things. 1 Cor. 2. 14. *But the natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God : for they are Foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them (and then certainly can have no proper Relish of them) because they are spiritually discerned.* — Surely such as trust to a moral Righteousness of their own, will find, as the Prophet speaks, *The Bed is shorter than that a Man can stretch himself on it, and the Covering narrower, than that a Man can wrap himself in it ; all our Righteousnesses being morally imperfect, and stained with moral Pollutions.* For as the Apostle *James* observes, *In many Things we all offend ; — and whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one Point, he is guilty of all.* Jam. 2. 10. & 3. 2.

In fine, if ever we obtain Salvation, and get to Heaven at last, we shall there, together with all Saints, cast down our Crowns at the Feet of God and the Lamb, and lie prostrate before the Throne, in Acknowledgment of our own Unworthiness, and in Admiration of the exceeding Riches of

of divine *Grace* in the whole of our Salvation by Christ, even from *Election* to *Glorification*. And if it were possible that *Shame* cou'd find a Place in Heaven, we should look back with the most sensible *Blushing* and *Self-Abhorance*, on our very best Services here in this World; freely and humbly confessing, that *all our Righteousnesses were as filthy Rags*; and shall then resolve the whole of our Salvation, from Beginning to End, into the Riches of the *free Grace* of God; the Grace of the Father, in appointing us to obtain Salvation by Jesus Christ; the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in purchasing Redemption for us; & the Grace of the *Holy Spirit*, in applying to us the purchased Redemption, by working in us unfeigned Faith, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our Effectual Calling; and keeping us by his Power thro' Faith unto eternal Salvation.— We shall take none of the Glory to our Selves; much less place the *Crown* on the Head of our *moral Agency* and *personal good Behaviour*, or our own Righteousness, exclusive of the *Righteousness of Faith*: we shall then feel the *Love of Christ* constraining us (in a most sweet and delightful Manner) to confess our selves *saved by Grace through FAITH, and that not of our selves, but by the Gift of God*.

I come now, in Prosecution of what was proposed under another general Head of Remarks,

IV. To inquire, whether *there is not more of Absurdity and Blasphemy couched in a disowning some of the main Ends of Christ's coming into the World, and so depreciating the glorious Design of his mediatorial Undertaking, than there possibly can be in the pretended Depreciation of moral Virtue, which our Author so loudly complains of, and taxes many Expositors and others with.*

The Body of Protestant Expositors and Preachers of the Gospel in general, stand strongly indicted by this Author, of *Blasphemy* as well as *Absurdity*; in that as he pretends, they *depreciate moral Virtue*, by the Sense they put upon his *Text*, and by other *commonly received Notions* in near Alliance with that. On this Account, he freely charges

ges them with *Weakness, Inattention, and Ignorance, or more criminal Designs*, as you have seen : But by what has been already offered in Reply to these Charges, I doubt not 'tis sufficiently manifest to intelligent and unbiassed Readers, that these reproachful Imputations want Truth to support them, and are unjustifiable either from Reason or Revelation. And I have before observed, that this Author has in Fact disowned or *depreciated* the main *Design*, or some of the essential *Ends* of the *Mediator's* glorious Undertaking. Now that he has done this, at least virtually and in Effect, I conclude, must be apparent to every judicious and unprejudic'd Reader ; if he observes, what an universal *Silence* there is throughout his Discourse concerning some of the *primary Ends* of Christ's coming ; which ought, and might have been taken special Notice of in *Pag.* 17, 18. as well as elsewhere. — But it seems, his Heart & Mind was taken up to such a Degree in Favour of his so much admired *moral Vertue*, and *Christ's settling the Scheme*, and his Thoughts were so engrossed by this Self-pleasing Theme, as that he overlooks the *great and ultimate Design* of all, God's being *glorified* in the eternal Salvation of his Elect by Jesus Christ. — The Name of the incarnate Son of God was, by special Direction from Heaven, called *Jesus* on this Account, *because he should save his People from their Sins.* Matth. 1. 21. Luk. 2. 21. — And this blessed Design he was to accomplish, both by *Price* and by *Power*, or by *Merit* and *Efficiency*, by the *Purchase* and the *Application* of Redemption, in the Execution of his mediatorial Offices. — The Prophets therefore predict these wonderful *Ends* of his Coming : but without a Word of his *settling this Scheme of Morality*, spoken by them ; and indeed the Scripture is a Stranger to the *Phrase*, as it is not to be found there ; tho' according to the proper Sense and Use of it, it is included in Christ's Commission, and Example, who fulfilled the Law, as for other Ends, so for a Directory to us, with Respect to our moral Conduct in the World. — But let us see how wide our Author is from the *Prophets*, and how distant in his

Sentiments

Sentiments from theirs, in this grand Article. He tells us after this Manner, — “ That for *this End* he [i. e. Christ] was *born*, and on this grand Design he came into the World, to set up the Christian Scheme in the World, to propagate Truth and Virtue among Mankind:” as tho’ this was all he had to do here ! Nay, if we believe this Author’s Insinuations, it was all that he *did* do, in a Manner : and to prove his Assertion, he instances in our Saviour’s *whole Sermon* on the Mount, which he insinuates consists only of Instructions leading to *Morality* : tho’ the *Sermon* it self contradicts this, in the beginning of Christ’s Instructions there, and in many following Paragraphs, if I mistake not. However, as I have before sufficiently shew’n, there are none of the Expositors or others, I have met with, who are by this Author so unbecomingly reflected on, but do declare the Necessity of the Practice of moral Duties, by all that profess themselves Christ’s Followers, as the proper Fruit of a true and saving *Faith*, and the best Evidence of the sanctifying Work of the holy Spirit, witnessing for them to all that behold their good *Conversation*, that they are the *Children of God*. — But to return, — as I said, Let us see how distant this Gentleman is, in his Sentiments of the *End of Christ’s being born*, from what the *Prophets* testify concerning him, in their Predictions of him. I shall instance but in a few of them, among the many that might be produc’d to the same Purpose. The Prophets tell us, That the Messiah shou’d bear our Iniquities, be wounded for our Transgressions, and have the Chastisement of our Peace laid upon him ; that he should finish Transgression, make an End of Sin, and bring in an everlasting Righteousness ; that his Name shou’d be called The Lord our Righteousness ; That in him shou’d all the Seed of Israel be justified, and shou’d glory, — saying, In him have I Righteousness and Strength ; and in a Word ; That by his Knowledge shou’d God’s righteous Servant justify many. — Now it’s evident, that Christ was born, and came into the World, for other and higher and more glorious Ends, than this Author does allow ; which will prove it self, and

discover his Weakness: If in this Case those celebrated Sayings are duely observed, namely, *That the Spirit of the Prophets are subject to the Prophets — And they that speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them.* — Here then the Conclusion is easily drawn from the Premises, and it plainly appears, that there is more of *Absurdity and Blasphemy*, in denying to CHRIST the Glory due to his Name, respecting the main and essential *Ends* of his coming into the World, than there can be in the pretended *depreciating moral Vertue*, so exclaimed against by our Antagonist. However, this is not all; for agreeable to these Prophecies above-mentioned, if we consult the Writings of the *New-Testament*, we shall find CHRIST JESUS represented as *being sent in the Likeness of sinful Flesh*, and for Sin, i.e. to be a Sin-offering; as *coming to fulfill the Law*, and to take away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself; as being accordingly obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross; and as bearing our Sins in his own Body upon the Tree; as shedding his Blood for many, for the Remission of Sins; as laying down his Life a Ransom for many; as giving himself for us, an Offering and a Sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling Savour; and in a Word, as being made a Curse for us, that so the Blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles thro' Jesus Christ. — These, and other Passages of Scripture of the like Import, that might be offered, plainly shew, that it is not our own personal good Behaviour, or strictest moral Vertue, on which the Scripture, in any Part, “suspends the whole of our Happiness,” — as is pretended: but upon the Mediation & Merit of Christ, and his Righteousness thro' Faith. Agreeable to which I may add, 2 Cor. 5. 21. *He (i. e. Christ) was made Sin for us, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him.* — God is represented as reconciling the World to himself, not imputing their Trespases; but imputing Righteousness without Works. And they that believe on the Son of God, are said to believe on him to Life everlasting; and consequently are delivered from the Wrath to come, from the Law, and from the Power of Sin and Death. Now upon this Scripture-Representation of

of Christ's *Design* (with its important Consequences) which is emphatically the *mediatorial Design*, on which Christ came into the World, I say, for any one openly to deny, or tacitly to disown, and treat with Neglect, such a *fundamental End* of Christ's coming, which respects in a special Manner his *Priestly Office*, wherein also all his other high and distinguishing Characters are struck at, is in its Nature and Consequence too nearly approaching to *Blasphemy*; and full freighted with *Absurdity*, yea, more than so, when done with Design, as seems to be the Case here in View, — by representing as if *personal Righteousness* were the only Thing that *avails* to obtain the *Favour of God*, and on which our *whole Happiness* is *suspended*; so making it properly our *justifying Righteousness*, and indeed our *only Righteousness*, in which to appear before God with *Acceptance*.

Now, to set this in a true Light, I shall produce this Author's own Words. That he might fasten *Reproach* on the Expositors and Preachers, who have not the like extravagantly magnifying Thoughts of *moral Virtue* with himself (tho' they urge it, as necessary under its proper scriptural Limitations) and probably to prejudice the Minds of his unwary unintelligent Readers, he thus censures *their* Notion of his Text, *Pag. 17*. "That it reflects Dishonour on
 " Jesus Christ the Son of God, and on the whole Christian
 " Scheme, which he came to set up in the World. Our Sa-
 " viour was the great Preacher of Righteousness: For *this*
 " End was he born, and on this grand Design came he into
 " the World, to propagate Truth and Virtue among Mankind.
 " It is *this* & only *this Righteousness* (that some are pleased
 " to style *Filthy Rags*) which he preaches up through the
 " whole of that divine Sermon on the Mount; which con-
 " tains the Sum and Substance of his *whole Doctrine*." —
 To countenance which Assertion, he cites *Matth. 7. 24. &c.*
 But with what propriety, I leave to be determined by the more judicious. —

However, by what has been before offered, it is easy to judge, *who* it is that " reflects Dishonour on Jesus Christ

“ the Son of God, and on the whole *Christian Scheme*. ” — Surely, if our Author had had such a tender Regard (as is insinuated) for the Honour of *Christ*, & the Vitals of Christianity, he would not have presumed, I think, to overlook some of the *main & essential Ends* of Christ’s coming, when enumerating them ; nor to pretend, that the grand Design was only to settle a Scheme of *Morality*, as a *sufficient Righteousness* ; and so by a necessary Consequence (according to Him) it follows, that they who bear those Sayings of *Christ*, which he would have refer merely to *Morality*, and doeth them, are the only wise Men in the Earth, that have built their House upon a Rock, and are therefore in the safest and most happy State of all Mankind. But surely, the Rock here intended, is *CHRIST* ; as the Apostle *Paul* explains it, 1 Cor. 10. 4. in Allusion to *Moses’s* smiting the Rock in the Wilderness, Num. 20. 11. And the smiting the Rock with a Rod is emblematical of Christ’s Sufferings, without which no Streams of Grace could be conveyed to us. He is therefore said to be stricken and smitten of God, Isa. 53. 4. 5. Hence Christ, this spiritual Rock, being smitten of the Father, is become the Rock of our Salvation, and the Fountain of Life. From him, as the smitten Rock, flows living Water. Joh. 4. 14. And them that thirst after Righteousness, he invites to come unto him and drink. Joh. 7. 37. — In vain will Men hew to themselves Cisterns of their own ; they will prove as broken Cisterns, that can hold no Water. Their Hope will make them ashamed, who place their Dependance on moral Vertue ; notwithstanding the highest possible Attainments in the Virtues of Morality, without a saving Faith in the Righteousness of Christ, which is the one Thing (and above all Things) needful.

Besides, if we consult *Matth. 5.* especially the third and sixth Verses, we shall find our Author greatly mistaken, in asserting, that it was this and only this moral Righteousness, which Christ preached up, in the whole of his divine Sermon on the Mount. —

Many Arguments might be drawn from these and other Parts of that Sermon of Christ, to evidence, that it is
Faith,

Faith, even such a Faith as leads the Soul out of *Self*, to *hunger and thirst after CHRIST* and his *Righteousness*, under a Sense of our own spiritual *Poverty*, hath the Promise of being *filled* or satisfied. This carries in it the *Sum and Substance*, the Essentials of that pure and holy Religion of *Jesus*, which he has taught us in the Gospel; not excluding, but drawing after it the Practice of moral Duties, which Christ has enjoined on all them that profess themselves his Followers.—Our Author proceeds to say, *Pag. 18.* “In his Life and Practice he fulfilled all *Righteousness*, not to excuse us from, but set us an Example of, doing likewise. Now, is that which the Son of God tho’t worth his coming down from Heaven to establish on Earth; that which is the Basis and in short the whole Superstructure of this his divine Religion: To recommend which to Mankind, he both lived and preached it up, and sealed the Truth of his Doctrine with his most precious Blood, shall we call this, I say, *Filthy Rags*? God forbid! God forbid! such a Thought should ever enter into our Hearts.”—And to give us a farther Specimen of the *Odium* he would cast on the Doctrine of the Expositors and Preachers, whom he aims at, he proceeds after this Manner,—“But if ever such a Thought should enter into us, we should be more solicitous to cast it out, than if we were possessed with seven Devils.”—However, as this appears to strain up moral Vertue to an undue and dangerous, if not to a blasphemous Pitch, which I think enough has been said to detect and expose, therefore I shall further, under this Head of Remarks, only offer the following Considerations.

1. If the *Errand* Christ came into the World upon, was in Fact as this Author represents it, then it appears a just Inference, That both CHRIST himself & his *Apostles* (not to mention the Prophets, who testified beforehand concerning it) must needs have been *Impostors*, either wilfully misrepresenting the Case, or else greatly misunderstanding it.—For Christ saith of himself, *Matth. 18. 11. The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost.*—Was it to save Souls from a lost perishing State in *Sin*? Or was it only to save Men

Men from a blind *Pagan State*, from *Heathen Ignorance* and *Idolatry*, and to bring them into the Knowledge and Practice of *Morality*? According to our Author it must be the latter, and not the former, that's intended, as *the End of Christ's coming*. But certainly *such a Thought* wou'd be very *absurd* and *blasphemous*. And God forbid! that any such mean and vile Apprehension of the End of Christ's coming should enter into our Hearts. God forbid, that we should suppose, this was the only or the main End of it!—It was therefore to save Souls from Sin and Misery, that he came; as is before proved. And Christ testifies that he came to give *his Life a Ransom for many*, Matth. 20. 28. Which he needed not to have done, if it were only to settle a *Scheme of Morality*. But the Scriptures teach us better Things concerning the Redeemer of Souls. See 1 Joh. 3. 5. *He was manifested to take away our Sins*. So Chap. 4. 9, 10. & 1 Tim. 1. 15.— And in this View the Baptist beheld Christ, when he said, *Behold the Lamb of God!* Joh. 1. 29.

2. According to this Author's Representation of the End of Christ's coming, the *Commission* he gave to his *Disciples*, and the *Errand* he sent them upon, was *superior* to *his own*; which would be an *Absurdity* to suppose, and *Blasphemous* in a high Degree.—Christ's Commission was *prior* and *superior* to that of his *Disciples*; and it was foretold long before he appeared in his Humanity, *Isai. 61. 1, 2, 3*. Christ is there described as *anointed of God*, and *sent, to preach good Tidings to the Meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim Liberty to the Captives, and the opening of the Prison-Doors to them that are bound; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them Beauty for Ashes, &c.*—Agreeably to this his Commission he begins his *Sermon in the Mount*: Tho' our Author pretends it is made wholly up of *moral Instruction*, which does not reach to the *binding up the broken-hearted*, nor does *Morality* set at *Liberty* those that are led *Captive* by Sin & Satan.—Christ himself notes, that in *him* was fulfilled the Prophet's Prediction, which was concerning *him*, Luk. 4. 18. And how aptly

aptly he proves it, and acts up to his Commission, is worthy of our Observation, even in the Beginning of his *Sermon on the Mount*. There we see, *he binds up the broken-hearted, brings good Tidings to the Meek, supports the Poor in Spirit with the Promise of the Kingdom of Heaven, and comforts them that are Mourners in Zion for their Sins, and opens the Prison-Doors to them that are bound, and sets the Captives, under Satan's Power at Liberty, and promises the Benefit of his Righteousness to all that hunger and thirst after it.* Christ here, in *Part*, fulfills his Commission, by pronouncing a *Blessing* on all that sustain these distinguishing Characters, as we find *Matth. 5. 3, 4, 5, 6.* — We may further note it as a strong Proof and undeniable Evidence of his Mission and Commission from the Father, as the true Messiah and Redeemer of Souls, we find him saying in his Answer to *John's* Messengers, *Matth. 11. 5. and Luk. 7. 22. The Blind see, the Lame walk, the Lepers are cleansed, &c.* Now, tho' these Things were actually done on the *Bodies* of Men, yet they had a *spiritual and mystical* Meaning, to prove Christ's Sufficiency and Power to minister Healing to the *Souls* of all that came or should come to Him, by Faith in his Righteousness and mediatorial Fulness. — What I have here offered is to shew the high Commission Christ came into the World invested with, as the *Mediator between God and Man*; and how punctually he has fulfilled the Business of it on the Earth; not merely by *preaching up Morality, and setting up that refined Scheme of moral Vertue*, as our Author suggests, but by establishing the more refined & excellent Scheme of Man's Recovery from his fallen State in *Adam*, and from all his contracted Guilt and Misery by actual Transgression: for which, Christ has made sufficient Provision, in coming up fully to the Terms of his Commission, by answering both the *preceptive and penal* Demands of the *Law*. — And now, that Christ might still prosecute the Trust committed to him; tho' advanc'd to the heavenly Glory, he authorizes his Disciples on Earth to carry on the Work given them to do in subordination to him, and puts them under Com-

mission,

mission, as having *all Power committed to him*. Therefore says he to them, *As my Father sent me, even so send I you.* Joh. 20. 21. — And what they were commanded to do, we find by *Matth. 10. 7, 8.* — They were to *preach the Gospel, to heal the Sick, cleanse the Lepers, raise the Dead, cast out Devils, &c.* A Work subservient to what Christ came upon, must be carried on by his Disciples, according to the extraordinary Measures of Grace, bestowed on them by Christ. — Indeed the Disciples preached up moral Duties, (yet under a Limitation, different from our Author) as we find in the *Acts* of the Apostles, and in their several *Epistles*; urging Christians to *maintain good Works*, in order to maintain their Christian Character, as having *believed in God our Saviour*, and thereby demonstrate the Sincerity of their Faith: whose pious Example in pressing moral Duties, hath been, is, and ever will be, followed by all Christ's faithful Embassadors, to the End of the World. But still, neither the Disciples, nor their Followers hinted at, ever presum'd to confine their Instructions to *moral Vertue*, or Duties of *Morality*. For *to them was committed the Word of Reconciliation*, by Christ; in whom God is said to be *reconciling the World to himself*, 2 Cor. 5. 19. They therefore preach'd *the glad Tidings of Peace*, and the gracious Terms of Reconciliation, namely, *Repentance toward God and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.* Acts 20. 21. Eminently they preach'd up *Faith* in the Incarnate Son of God, who for our Sake was *obedient unto Death*, who *suffered for Sins, the Just for the Unjust*, who was *delivered for our Offences, and raised again for our Justification.* — These are some of the essential *Ends* of Christ's coming into the World, which the primitive Preachers insisted on. Which shews, that Christ came for *higher and more excellent Ends*, than meerly to “set up a Scheme of (even Christian) *Morality* among Mankind.” Whereas if our *Author's* Account of Christ's coming were true (as represented in his Discourse) then the Commission he gave to his *Disciples*, must be *superior* even to his own; but the contrary has been proved. And I farther observe, that in Proportion

tion, as any deny or obscure the *main Design* of Christ's coming into the World, so far (I say) as this is done by any, it must appear equally *blasphemous* and *absurd*.

3. Aother Argument is, — That if Christ was born and came into the World only to *settle the Scheme* so highly applauded by our Author, then his Work is already *finished*, and he has Nothing further to act on Man's Behalf. For having once *settled this Scheme*, it seems according to our Author, Christ had Nothing more to do. But we have a *more sure Word*, than this Author's Credit will reach, in this Case. The Scriptures plainly tell us, *The Man Christ Jesus is Mediator between God and Man*; and as Mediator he sustained a *three-fold Office* when on Earth, *viz.* the Office of a Prophet, and of a Priest, and of a King: which Offices he continues still, tho' in Heaven, to execute in the Earth, not personally, but by his Agents and Instruments. He still executes his *prophetick Office*; and this he does by his Spirit enlightening us, by his Word instructing us, and by his Ministers dispensing the Word and Ordinances. — Christ also still executes his *Kingly Office*, in common Providence, in his Church, and in the Hearts of Believers. Christ by his Kingly Power restrains (as he pleases) the Sons of Men, both Saints and Sinners, from the open as well as secret Wickedness they are naturally inclined to. He restrains by his Power the Persecutors of his Church and People: He makes *the Wrath of Man to praise him, and the Remainder of Wrath he restrains*. He subdues by his Power the Stubbornness of Men's Wills, and brings them into Subjection to his holy Law: and as he has *led Captivity Captive*, He rescues Souls from the *Power of Satan*, and *translates* them into *his own Kingdom*, the Church militant here below, by converting Grace, *renewing them in the Spirit of their Minds*, sanctifying and fitting them for triumphal Glory; so that *where he is*, there all that are *given to him* by the Father, in the Covenant of redeeming Grace, shall be also in due Time, in Answer to his mediatory Prayer, *Job. 17. 24.* — Thus we see, Christ had *other and higher Motives* in View, when he

came into the World, than to meerly *settle a Scheme of Morality*. — But then by Way of Eminency, we are to consider Christ as sustaining the Office of a *Priest*; wherein the Redemption of Sinners is in a more special and primary Manner concerned: And his *Priesthood* is an *everlasting Priesthood*. He has once offered up himself a lasting Sacrifice, acceptable to God, for the Expiation of Sin. Therefore it is said, *With his Stripes we are healed*: And that, because the *Chastisement of our Peace was upon him*. Isai. 53. 5. — Agreeable to which the Apostle Paul remarks, that *we have Redemption through his Blood, even the Forgiveness of Sins*. Eph. 1. 7. — The same Thing he repeats in Col. 1. 14. — See also Heb. 5. 7. — And the Apostle having proved the Insignificancy of legal Sacrifices, in Point of spiritual Purification, or to cleanse the Soul from Sin, Heb. 9. 13. he proceeds, y. 14. to say, *How much more shall the Blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without Spot to God, purge your Consciences from dead Works to serve the living God?* — Christ is therefore said to be *consecrated for evermore*. Heb. 7. 28. —

Having thus hinted at some of the Ends and Designs of Christ's coming into the World, and what he did when here below, superiour to that of *settling a Scheme of moral Virtue*; I proceed to shew, That notwithstanding all that he did in establishing, as well as refining this *Scheme*, and what he has done in his higher and more excellent Acts relating to his glorifying God in the Work of *Man's Redemption*, which was the *principal* Thing aimed at in the Father's anointing and sending him, and Christ's voluntarily engaging in the great and difficult Service of a Mediator, his Work is not wholly done (as before has been noted with Regard to his Prophetick and Kingly Offices) but this of his *Priestly* Office he *continues* still in the Exercise and Execution of. — He is said to be *our Fore-runner, entered into Heaven*, (Heb. 6. 20.) to *appear in the Presence of God for us*. (Heb. 9. 24.) — And he appears before God as *our Advocate*. (1 Joh. 2. 1) — And this our blessed Advocate with the Father is *able also to save even to the utter-*

most all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them. (Heb. 7. 25.) — It plainly appears then, from what has been said under this Head, that neither *Moses*, nor the *Prophets*, any of them, that testified before-hand of Christ's coming, nor *Christ* himself, nor his *Apostles*, are Vouchers for our Author : but unite in witnessing against his Sentiments, that the End of Christ's being born and coming into the World was to settle a Scheme of Morality, either exclusive or transcendent to all those wonderful Designs, I have refer'd to above, that according to the Scripture Christ came for and partly effected when here on the Earth, and is now carrying on in Heaven, by Vertue of his mediatorial Authority, Sufficiency, and boundless Grace. — Unhappy it is, that these great Things concerning Christ should be all overlook't, and as it seems, with Design, by our Author, to magnifie moral Virtue, whatever becomes of the Essentials of Christianity. — Now, what the Apostle *Peter* awfully speaks concerning false Teachers, I am afraid is like to be the deplorable State of poor *New-England*, and the Churches here, if the Errors advanced by some among us are suffered to prevail. See 2 Pet. 2. 1, 2. *There were false Prophets also among the People, even as there shall be false Teachers among you, who — shall bring in — Heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift Destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious Ways, by Reason of whom the Way of Truth shall be evil spoken of.* Now they deny the Lord Jesus, who deny the Divinity of his Person, and his Satisfaction ; and who deny any of the Fundamentals of the Doctrine of Christ ; either the Doctrine which he himself taught in his personal Ministry, or which his Apostles by Commission from him, and under the Inspiration of his Spirit, taught after his Ascension. Such may well be ranked under the Character of them that are ashamed of Christ and of his Words, or that deny the Lord which bought us, who reject the Doctrine delivered by his Apostles in his Name, under whatever Pretence. Christ and his Apostles harmonized in their Doctrine :

And the Apostles fully agreed among themselves. Hence they sometimes bore *Testimony* to one another's Doctrine. 2 Pet. 3. 15. — *Even as our beloved Brother Paul also, according to the Wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you; as also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these Things: in which are some Things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned & unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own Destruction.* Now, on this Text I ground an Argument, to prove the divine Authority of the Doctrine of Election, of Original Sin, of imputed Righteousness, and other Doctrines contained in the Scriptures, particularly in Paul's Epistles, which protestant Expositors and Preachers in general have held, and for which this Author so strongly condemns them. The Argument for Proof of these Doctrines which Paul preach'd, lies here. As Peter was one of Christ's Apostles, sent by a special and immediate Commission, and under the special Direction and Influence of the Holy Spirit, to preach the Gospel, to *disciple all Nations, baptising them in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all Things, whatsoever Christ had commanded them*; hence in this Way of teaching and observing all Things which Christ had commanded, that Promise was his, *Lo, I am with you alway, even to the End of the World.* Matth. 28. 19, 20. — If Paul therefore, in any of his *Epistle's*, had delivered Doctrines contrary to the *Mind of Christ*, which Peter had a personal and very particular Knowledge of, it must be supposed he would in Faithfulness have corrected Paul's Error in that Case. But Peter, we see, justifies and confirms those Doctrines Paul had delivered in his Epistles; yea, tho' some of them were hard to be understood, and so (like some of the Parables and Sayings of Christ) required a close Application of Mind to know their Meaning. On which we may note, That it is for Want of a mature and deliberate Consideration, and Inquiry into the Nature and Authority, as well as Grounds of these and some other Scripture-Doctrines, that some (to use the Apostle's Words) *who are unlearned and unstable, wrest Paul's Epistles, even as they do also the other*

other Scriptures, unto their own Destruction.— If then, divine Inspiration and the Testimony of the Spirit, by which these Apostles spake, has any Weight with us, we must conclude, these Doctrines (however contested and ridicul'd by some at this Day) yet being taught in Paul's Epistles, they are according to the *Mind of Christ*; and those that deny his Truths, however hard to be understood, I think, may justly be said to *deny Christ*, and may fear that *he will deny them before his Father which is in Heaven*, according to *Matth. 10. 33*.

But I have yet something farther to add on Christ's Behalf, and in Vindication, as of the Doctrines we are here treating of, so of those that *profess them*.

It is worthy of our Observation, to whom the Apostle Peter writes his *Epistles*. The first of them he superscribes thus,— *To the Strangers scattered throughout Pontus, &c. ELECT according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father*. His second Epistle is thus directed, *To them that have obtained like precious Faith with us, through the Righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*. Those he wrote to, were *Christians* in the Apostle's Eye and Opinion, that had been instructed in the Doctrines which *Peter*, and *Paul*, and other Apostles preached, and had believed and professed the same. Now, if we compare these Characters of those he wrote to, with the Apostle's Words in *2 Pet. 3. 17*. *Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these Things before, beware lest ye also being led away with the Error of the Wicked, fall from your own Stedfastness*: What other, or stronger Evidence do we need, to confirm our Faith in these Doctrines, taught in Paul's Epistles, and in other Parts of Scripture? It is plain, they whom the Apostle wrote to, had *known* these Doctrines, had been thoro'ly instructed in them, and were not Strangers to them: However he cautions them, in a Day of Temptation, to *beware lest they being led away with the Error of the Wicked* (viz. whom he had before described *the unlearned and unstable*, i. e. Men that were *willingly ignorant of these Things*, and of an *unsound Mind*, who perverted the Scriptures, to invalidate the Doctrines

Doctrines contained therein, and make them, if possible, serve to promote *Error*) fall from their own *Stedfastness*. It seems, they had been taught these, and other Gospel-Doctrines, from their first Acquaintance with, and Profession of Christianity, and were in some Measure *establiſh'd* in them ; yet, were not so out of all Danger by *Seducers*, but that they had need be upon their Guard.— It is beyond all Contradiction then, I presume, that the *Apostles*, in these and all other Points, harmonized with their Lord and Master *Jesus Christ* ; as by the Power and Influence of his Spirit, and in his Name and under his Authority, they spake, and delivered these Things to us. And we have the Testimony even of *Devils*, confirming it by one of their officious Agents, who followed *Paul* and the other Ministers that accompanied him, and who contrary to her own and her Master's Gains was constrained to cry out, and say, *These Men are the Servants of the Most High God, which shew unto us the Way of Salvation.* (Act. 16. 17.) Now, the Method they took in *shewing Men the Way of Salvation*, was, by *preaching CHRIST*, and the Doctrines he had directed them to preach ; particularly, the Doctrine of a *personal and eternal Election of Grace*, the Doctrine of *Original Sin*, of *Redemption by the Blood of Christ*, of *Justification by Faith*, of *imputed Righteousness*, of *efficacious Grace*, &c. which have been considered in the foregoing Part of these Remarks. They also preached, *both to the Jews and also to the Greeks*, *Repentance toward God*, and *Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ* ; and testify'd to Believers the Necessity of a *holy Practice*, pressing on them the Duties of the Christian Life, in a plain and powerful Manner.— It may be proper now to look a little into *Paul's* Testimony concerning himself, and see what he says in his own Behalf, and in Respect of the Doctrines he had preach'd. He makes that solemn Affirmation (Act. 20. 20, 27.) *I kept back nothing that was profitable to you — For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the Counsel of God.*— Now if these Doctrines I have treated of, are not really a Part of *God's Counsel*, or are not truly profitable to Men, *Paul*, and the other Apostles and Preachers

Preachers of the Gospel, in the Infant-State of Christianity, must be deemed great *Impostors*, and designing to deceive the World to a monstrous Degree. But, how horrid is this for any to imagine ! Tho' perhaps there be some of *Paul's* Directors among us, and Pretenders to correct the Scriptures, who may think it high Time to blot some Texts out of the *Bible*, as they have declared for erasing these Doctrines out of our excellent *Assembly's Catechism*.—

I hope, the candid Reader will excuse this long Excursion, occasioned by a *Pamphlet's* coming to my Hand as I was transcribing my Papers, intitled, “A Narrative of an unhappy Contention in the Church at *Ashford* in *Connecticut*, &c. published by their late Pastor :” In which are sundry gross *Arminian* Errors, or worse, as I apprehend, calculated to *destroy the Faith*, and subvert the Religion professed in these Churches. *

But

* The Gentleman refer'd to above, is Mr. *John Bass*, late Minister of *Ashford*, who was discharged from his Pastoral Office there, the Reasons whereof we have given us by himself, in his *Narrative*—namely, His changing his Sentiments concerning several Doctrines, profest in this Land, from the first Settlement of Christianity here, and plainly revealed in Scripture, according to the united Judgment of that venerable *Consociation* that dismissed him.—As he informs us in the Beginning of his *Pamphlet*, at his Settlement (Anno 1743.) he professed himself to be of the Calvinian Class; and as such remained for several Years, yet all that Time suspected of *Arminianism*, &c. And upon it he says “*Calvinistick Principles* I then found to be at this Day a Clergy-man's main Defence, the best he can hit upon to provide him Food and Raiment, and to fix him in the good Graces of the Populace : Interest set this Way.”—Truly it gives just Ground of Suspicion, that this Gentleman made a Profession of the *Calvinistic* Doctrine, at his Settlement, and for some Time after, from those mercenary Views he speaks of.

It does not appear but that those zealous and critical Hearers he speaks of, were Persons of Integrity, as well as sound in the Faith, and orthodox in their Principles; and doubtless they found their Minister to be of a temporizing Disposition and Conduct.--- They are highly to be commended, for their Care to suppress Error, and to maintain the Faith once delivered to the Saints, which all that profess Christianity should contend earnestly for, and not to be carried about with every Wind of Doctrine, as too many are at this Day apt to be captivated and ensnared by.--- But, these Hearers of his, it seems, were too critical and judi-

cious,

But to return to the Point in Hand, To deny the *Doctrines* of Christ, is to deny CHRIST: and to deny the great *Ends* of his coming into the World, as our Author in the Discourse under Examination has done, must reflect Dis-

grace

cious, as well as *zealous* for the Truth, to be drawn to *deny the Faith* they had received and professed, and with their Pastor to run into *Error*; notwithstanding all his Artifices to hold his Station and act under Disguise, as he had done in Years past, by his own Confession, and as is reported, covertly, to betray that People into the like *Arminian* Delusions with himself.

Now that he has fallen from, and denies some of the most important Doctrines, contained & taught in the Gospel, is evident.---He begins (*Pag. 13.*) with that of *Original Sin*.--- But as I have insisted on this Topick, in the foregoing Remarks, I refer the Reader to what is there offered in Vindication of this *Doctrine*,--- and shall here only observe, that this Gentleman appears to me *inconsistent* with himself. -- For he says, *Pag. 14.* " God in his Wisdom and Righteousness saw fit, not only to turn them [i. e. *Adam* and *Eve*] out of the Garden of *Eden*--- " but, also to sentence them to a State of wearisom Labour, abundant Sorrow and Temptation, and after this, to return to the Ground, from whence they were taken: This was to them a Punishment of their Sin; but the Effects of it did not terminate here; for I find that God took Occasion for this Sin to lay the same Sentence upon all their Posterity."--- On which I argue thus,

It is certain, that God who is the *Judge of all the Earth*, must and will do Right: But can it be possible in Reason, or consistent with Scripture, to suppose, that the same Sentence, pronounced on *Adam*, should descend to his Posterity, if he had not stood as their common Head and Representative in that first Covenant God made with him? Or how could his Offspring share with him in the Penalties of his Sin (as is owned by this Author) if there were not the Communication of Sin from him, and Guilt lying on them? --- It therefore appears to me, that by his Concessions here, he has given up the Point in Debate, notwithstanding the Arguments he produces to the contrary; and by necessary Consequence owns the Doctrine of *Original Sin*, which he would be thought to deny.

In this Narrative the Author denies the Doctrine of *Election*, of which I have also briefly treated in the foregoing Remarks; therefore shall only add here, that to deny the Doctrine of *Election*, does manifestly impeach the *Infinity, absolute Sovereignty, and Unchangeableness* of God.--- with whom is no variableness, neither Shadow of turning.--- He is in one Mind, and who can turn him? He performeth the Thing that is appointed (or that he has appointed) for me!-- In a Word, it is to assume God's Prerogative, and a placing Man in God's Stead, in the Matter of

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grace and Contempt upon him : it truly reflects Dishonour upon the Son of God, and upon the whole Scheme of Redemption

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of our Salvation : --- Which leads to make Man the Author of his own Salvation, and not God.--- The Doctrine also of the special Redemption by Christ, of those given him by the Father, this Author denies : And insinuates the Doctrine of universal Redemption ; to prove which he offers some Scriptures, that appear to me very wrongly applied, and among others brings those Words of our Saviour, *Joh. 3. 16.* And by this he manifestly intends, that the Belief or Faith Christ there speaks of, is in Man's own Power, and so the Agency of the Holy Spirit in a Way of special Grace is superseded.--- Therefore under his fourth Head treating of Regeneration, he tells us, this " includes an ingenuous Sorrow, excited by a View of the Love of God and Jesus Christ."--- An ingenuous Sorrow ! So that according to him, Man's Regeneration or Conversion depends on his own ingenuous Disposition, or his being of a pliable Temper, easily drawn, and by some happy Gift of Nature led to contemplate or view the Love of God and Jesus Christ. But this is not according to the Description the Apostle Paul gives us, *2 Cor. 7. 10.* where it is termed a Godly (and not merely an ingenuous) Sorrow, that leads to and issues in evangelical Repentance, a Repentance not to be repented of ; which Repentance is to Salvation. And if not to be repented of, it must finally issue in eternal Salvation ; which proves the true Christian's Perseverance in Grace. This is also denied by the Author of the Narrative under our Consideration here ; and consequently the ingenuous Sorrow he speaks of, according to any consistent Sense, can mean no other than a meer legal Sorrow, or the Sorrow of the World, which works Death : it being merely natural, and not of supernatural Grace.--- But if " Holiness [as he speaks, *Page. 20.*] " is the Effect of a divine Operation upon the Mind," Then Repentance must be of the same Original, as one of the first Fruits of Holiness, wrought in us by the Operation of God, --- a supernatural, transcendent Work of the Holy Spirit, in all the Parts of it.--- What becomes then of his ingenuous Sorrow ? --- It shews us indeed, how fond some Persons are of novel and ambiguous Phrases, to amuse the World, and mask their Errors, under plausible Appearances, by a double meaning in their Manner of expressing Things of a religious Nature. From whence we may gather, that altho' in this Narrative the Author has produced some particular Texts of Scripture to support his Errors, however wrongly applied, yet his main Dependence is on Mr. Taylor's Sentiments, to whom he often refers his Readers for a full Decision of the Points in Debate : When it is well known, that the Principles that Writer has espoused have been condemned as erroneous, and contrary to Scripture-Doctrine, by the Consent of Protestants in general: Besure by all the soberer and more judicious Part of them; from the Beginning of the Reformation ; therefore to be justly suspected as of a poisonous Nature, destructive to vital Religion.--- And it is much to be lamented, that any should be found among us, in these Churches

by him ; and so upon *the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, even the hidden Wisdom which God ordained before the World unto*

of New-England, and in the Ministry, leavened with such a Spirit of Opposition to the *Truth as it is in Jesus*.

I shall only add, in my Remarks on this Narrative, That the *Consociation* which acted in Mr. *Bass's* Dismission, are represented by him, as proceeding in an arbitrary Manner toward him and some of the People of *Ashford*, tenacious of the like Errors, and which probably he had, by his Insinuations, drawn them *ignorantly* into. The pretended Complaint is, The superseding of a *Vote* previously passed in that Church, *viz.* That in Case of Difficulty arising, the Matter should be decided by a *Council* mutually chosen by them ; or to that Purpose.-- Which Mr. *Bass* appears by his Account to have insisted on ; but was denied.-- For which, I think, there was good Reason.

A *Council* mutually chosen must have each of the contending Parties Consent ; which, as he relates the Case, cou'dn't be obtained then.

And farther I suppose, Mr. *Bass* was not ignorant, that the Legislative Power in *Connecticut* Government, had long since passed a Law, that all Matters of the same Kind, in Churches, that cou'd not be decided and healed within themselves, should be determined by a *Consociation* of Elders and Messengers of Churches, within the Limits of that County, where such Difference was subsisting.--- These Gentlemen then acted a wise and laudable Part, agreeable to their own Constitution. But to this Method of Procedure Mr. *Bass* objects, and labours to evade, it's likely, to obtain a *pick'd* Number of Elders to favour his Cause, and continue him to act with the like Disguise, as in Years past he had done.

With Regard to the Procedure of that venerable Consociation, so much complain'd of in this Narrative, I shall take the Liberty to say ; It is to me a hopeful Omen, That God has Mercy in Reserve for these Churches, and will, it's hoped, appear to defend them against the Growth of *Arminian* and other corrupt Opinions, and establish them in the Doctrines of the Gospel ; when we find such a Number of Rev. Ministers, with their Delegates, united in their Result, (*nemine contradicente*) determined, from the Soundness of their Faith, and well grounded scriptural Principles, to appear for the Truth, and suppress Error, and as Instruments [we trust] in God's Hand to rescue that poor People of *Ashford*, from the Ruin impending over them, with a threatening Aspect on their Children after them,--- and also to convince their Pastor, if possible, and recover him from the Errors he had unhappily fallen into. I pray God to strengthen their Hands in the Cause of Christ, and stir up others, that they may also appear for the Defence of the Gospel, and make a vigorous Stand against the growing Corruptions of the present Day, both in Doctrine and Manners.--

What I have offered by Way of Remark on some Passages of this Narrative, does not proceed from a Disaffection to the Author's Person,--- but from an awful Apprehension of the sinking State of these Churches, if the Sentiments this Gentleman has exhibited to the World, should be suffered in Providence to prevail. Which God in Mercy prevent !

our Glory. 1 Cor. 2. 7(Do's it not most evidently dishonour CHRIST, to represent him only as a *Preacher* and *Pattern* of moral Righteousness; and at the same Time to conceal that great Gospel-Truth, our being *by his Obedience made Righteous*? nor so much as hinting, as if Men were *naturally destitute* of true moral *Vertue*; when in Fact the Depravity contracted by the Fall, has spread it self in its sorrowful Effects on all Mankind, and brought an universal Darknes and spiritual Death on all the Faculties of human Nature; so that now Men's *moral Agency* naturally leads them only to *Evil*, and not to that which is *Good*, as has been before observed. And yet our Author reduces the *Religion of Jesus* to a meer *refined System of moral Vertue*, or the *Religion of Nature*; which appears the worse, when it's considered withal, how superlatively this *natural Religion* or *moral Vertue* is dignified and exalted by him, in his representing it, not only as "the *new Nature* of right Action, which good Men are said to put on," but as "the *ultimate View* of God in all his Dispensations," yea, as "the *supreme Dignity* of God himself."—Let every one now judge, whether there is not a greater Appearance of *Absurdity and Blasphemy* in what this Author has discoursed in undue Applause of *Morality*, to the Disparagement of the *Mediator* and his Design, than there possibly can be in our (pretended) *depreciating of moral Vertue*, or the *Righteousnesses* of the very best Men upon Earth; always to be understood with the Limitations and Restrictions that have been offered, and not in an absolute Sense, as this Author vainly insinuates, and wou'd have the World believe, contrary to known Fact, and without the least Colour of Reason.

I come now to the last general Head of Remarks proposed, which was,

V. To resolve these two Inquiries; (1.) *Whether our Author's reproachful Description of the Religion of Protestants opposed by him, (particularly as expressed in the 7th and 8th Pages of his Discourse) be not fairly applicable rather to his own Religion, so far as we have it exhibited in*

this his Discourse? — And then (2.) *Whether the Objections which he has framed and pretended to Answer, in Relation to his Discourse (at the Close of it) do not really stand good, and contain a true & just Description of it, in it's Nature and Tendency, notwithstanding his laboured Solutions?*

I. The first Inquiry is, *Whether the Author's Invectives, or the reproachful Description he has given of the Religion of Protestants opposed by him, in his Discourse (particularly his Reflections in Pag. 7th & 8th) be not fairly applicable rather to the Religion pleaded for and recommended by himself in this his Discourse?*

He represents the *pure and perfect Religion of JESUS*, as by Means of the Principles which he opposes, “*turn'd in many Places into an idle Speculation, a mysterious Faith, a senseless Superstition, and a groundless Recumbency.*” Now the Question is, *Whether these dark Characters do not more properly belong to the Religion our Author pleads for, than that he inveighs against?* And I shall freely offer my Sentiments on this Point, however disagreeable they may be to him, or others: Not with a Design to prejudice the Minds of any against his Person, or injure his Name, but to convince him (if possible) of the pernicious Tendency of his Discourse, and to warn others against the dangerous Tenets he there espouses and urges.

(1.) As to *idle Speculation*, his Discourse seems evidently to abound with it. For such, it plainly appears (I think) the darling Sentiments of this Author are, *viz.* That the *grand Design* of Christ's coming into the World was only to *set up the Christian Scheme*; and that this in *Sum and Substance* is but a more *refined System of Morality*, enforced by some *peculiar Motives*: nor is his Pretence, that “*our whole Happiness is suspended on moral Virtue, or our personal good Behaviour,*” any other than a meer *idle Speculation*. If we receive these Principles of his, our Dependance for *Justification* in the Sight of God must be, not on the *Righteousness which is of God by Faith*, but on that which is of the *Law*. Whereas divine Revelation assures us, that *Christ is become of none Effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified*

justified by the Law ; and that as many as are of the Law, are under the Curse. Gal. 2. 10. & 5. 4. — Such therefore can obtain only an imaginary Justification, and so no better than an imaginary Title to Happiness. What then must these Pretences of this *Author* be, more than *idle Speculations*? The main Principles he holds and advances in his Discourse, appear to me at best but *idle Theory*, speculative *Absurdity*, without any solid Foundation in “ Scripture, or Reason, or even common Sense.” — And,

2. As to *mysterious Faith*, which our *Author* adds to his *idle Speculation*, how aptly (tho’ perhaps inadvertently) hath he given us a further Description of his *own Religion*? Delineating to the Life, what that is by his own Confession and publick Declaration, That “ to set up the “ *Christian Scheme*, the most refined System of *moral Vertue* that ever the World was blessed with, was the grand “ *Design* of CHRIST’s coming into the World ;” and that this *moral Vertue* is the “ *Basis, and whole Superstructure* of the Christian Religion”; and that “ the *whole* of Man’s Happiness is suspended on his *personal* good Behaviour”; and that “ this is the Condition of *all* God’s Favours to us,” &c. Consequently, that our whole Happiness is within the Compass of our own Power ; which must imply a mighty Opinion of our *Self-Sufficiency*, and the certain Validity of *Self-Righteousness*. To believe all which, is to believe Things in their own Nature *incredible*, contradictory to the general Current of Revelation, and repugnant even to the Dictates of enlighten’d Reason and Conscience : therefore it may justly be called a *mysterious Faith* indeed. But surely this is not according to the Faith of God’s Elect, and an acknowledging the Truth which is after Godliness, in Hope of eternal Life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the World began. (Tit. 1. 1, 2.) Such as disown the Doctrine of Election, of the Covenant of Redemption, of Original Sin, of efficacious Grace, and in a Word, of its being the grand Design of the Mediator, to atone for Sin, and bring in everlasting Righteousness, and justify Many ; as held forth in the Scriptures, are in Danger (if not come to that

that Length already) of *denying the Lord that purchased his Church with his own Blood*, of renouncing the Doctrine of the ever blessed TRINITY, and exploding what is *without Controversy the great Mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the Flesh*.—The Faith that this Author professes, in the Discourse before us, is not that Faith which the Apostles preached, lived by, and kept unto the Death. (See *Gal. 1. 23. & 2. 16,—20. & 2 Tim. 4. 7*) The Apostle declares he had *kept the Faith*, the same Faith he had preached, respecting the fundamental Doctrines of Christianity, as set forth in his Epistles: and the same Faith has been received and kept, in general, also by *Protestant Expositors and Preachers of the Gospel*. But the Faith of our Author is a *mysterious Faith*, truly; not founded in right Reason, nor taught in the Scriptures, which is the Rule and Standard of Faith, “teaching what Man is to believe concerning God, and what Duty God requires of Man.”

This Author's Faith may rather be traced by turning our Eye to the *Romish Church*; where it may be found without much Difficulty, I apprehend, if it be not the very Essence of the *Romish Faith*, lying at the Bottom of that *Mystery of Iniquity*, which now is, and for a long Time hath been working in the World. It certainly bears so near a Resemblance to it, that it is hard to distinguish them one from the other, or to say wherein there appears any important Difference.

The *Romish Church* leads all in her Communion off from the *Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, from his Merits and Satisfaction, and from the supernatural Energy of his Spirit. Tho' they speak of his *Merits* (as do's our Author also) yet they look to their own *Works*, their *moral Agency*, and place their Dependance on their *personal good Behaviour*, with him, or rather he with them. They say, as he does, that personal good Behaviour is that on which is suspended the whole of our Happiness: but to say, as he doth, that *Revelation* or the Scripture every where thus suspends it, is to raise a false Report of the Scripture, in my Opinion; and they that do so, are in Danger of *wrest-*
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ing it to their own Destruction. And tho' he occasionally speaks of our *Forgiveness* and *Acceptance through the Merits of Christ*, so do they of the *Romish Church*, while yet they build all upon Works. Our Author indeed once mentions *Faith & Repentance*, but they are bro't in as it were accidentally, and spoken of by the by, seemingly with an indifferent Air, as if these were Things comparatively but of little Moment; and he lays the *chief Stress* on *moral Virtue*. Just so do the *Papists*. They glory in their Abstinences, Pilgrimages, and Visits to the Shrines of their canonized Saints: and to atone for former Sins, and obtain Favour with God, they have their Works of Supererogation, which they depend on as meritorious. What can our Author's "*whole Happiness suspended on his personal good Behaviour*," or "*good Living*" (another of his Phrases) intend less than what I have mentioned concerning the *Papists* Dependence on their own Merits, or their good Works? What do his Words imply, but that a *good Life* is the *antecedent Condition of Forgiveness*, and that we are *justified by Works of Righteousness which we have done*? or what is it better, than to believe with the *Papists*, that CHRIST has merited that *we may merit*? *Mysterious Faith* indeed!

I would lead this Author to a further Parallel of his *mysterious Faith*, founded on *moral Virtue*, or Duties of Morality, in the received Sentiments of the Savage and Unciviliz'd Heathen, and the Dependence they have on *moral Virtue*. Generally they have a *Faith* (such as it is) of some superintendent Deity, and of a future State, where every one shall be happy or miserable, according to their *personal good or ill Behaviour* here,—i. e. according to the Rules of Morality among them. Such as have lived morally, are (as they imagine) at Death to go to the *Southward*, and enjoy much Pleasure in a warm Climate and temperate Air: but such as have been corrupt & immoral in Life according to them, they assign to the *Northern* and frigid Parts of the World, to be afflicted with Cold. So that their Hopes for Futurity are built on *moral Virtue*; on which this Author also places such a Dependence.

I suppose now, the Reader may easily determine, by what has been said, To *whom* the Charge of holding a *mysterious* (stupid) *Faith* is justly to be applied. For tho' it's designed by him, to cast open Contempt on the *Faith* professed in these *Churches* and by their *Teachers* in general, so plainly founded in Scripture; yet the Reproach must lie upon this *Author*, whose *Faith*, as professed by him in his Discourse, so nearly resembles, or is rather of the same Cast with that of the *Papists*, or the *Heathens*, particularly in Point of *Justification by Works*... Therefore to prevent turning back again to *Popery*, or *Heathenism*, from which we and our Fathers, and the Protestant Churches have been so happily delivered, it concerns every one to take Heed to themselves, that they be not *carried about with a strange Wind of Doctrine*, or entertain such a *Faith* as the Scripture has *not* taught us, but is the meer Invention of crafty Seducers, who have manifestly departed from *the Truth as it is in Jesus*, and espoused such *Errors*, as tend to the Overthrow of that *pure Religion*, which has thus long been the Glory and Renown of these Churches, and of the Protestant Churches in general.

I shall dismiss this Head, which relates to our Author's *mysterious Faith*, with reminding my Reader, of the Caution given to us, in the 2d Epistle of Joh. *v. 8, 9, 10, 11. Look to your selves, that we lose not those Things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full Reward.—Who-so-ever transgresseth, and abideth not in the Doctrine of Christ, bath not God. He that abideth in the Doctrine of Christ, he bath both the Father and the Son.—If there come any unto you, and bring not this Doctrine, receive him not into your House, neither bid him God Speed.—For he that biddeth him God Speed, is partaker of his evil Deeds.—Only give me Leave to add one Remark here, in a Word: The Doctrine of Christ, as above-mentioned, must intend the Doctrine delivered by Christ and his Apostles, contained in the Gospel, particularly respecting his Person and Mediation:—And for any one to overlook the great Work of the Redeemer, the Satisfaction he has made for Sin, and assign*

it as the only End or grand Design of our Saviour's coming into the World, to *settle a Scheme of Morality* and appear in Quality of a *Preacher* and a *Pattern of moral Virtue*,— as I think our Author has done— This, I say, is by a just Interpretation to deny Christ some of the essential Glories of his *Mediation*; — 'tis in Effect or in Part (at least) to deny his Incarnation, or coming in the Flesh, and so far, not to confess him: and he who denies that, the Apostle tells us, is a *Deceiver*.

3. Another Article of Charge, which this Author brings against Orthodox Expositors, and Preachers, who hold the *commonly received* Opinions in Divinity, is, that by their Means “ *the Religion of Jesus is in many Places turned into a senseless Superstition.*” Which must, I think, refer either to their Doctrine of *Conviction, Terror, and Humiliation*, preparatory to, closing with Christ by Faith; or to the laudable Practice among us, of keeping Days of *Fasting and Prayer*, as well as publick *Thanksgiving* (if intended in this View, it must reflect on publick Authority primarily, for those Appointments) or to the Churches being scrupulous of admitting *human Inventions* into the *Worship* of God; or else to our coming to God *in the Name of the Mediator*, depending on *his Righteousness*, and not on our own *moral Virtue*, or *personal Righteousness*, for Acceptance with God, and obtaining his Favour; or lastly, to our being unwilling to make *Morality* the whole Sum and Substance of *Christianity*. And taken with this Reference, it may intend, that whatsoever any pretend to in Religion more than only *moral Virtue*, or any Thing beyond a *Righteousness of their own*, is but a *senseless Superstition*: And this is truly according to his own declared Sentiment, by representing *moral Virtue* (to use his own Phrase) as the very “ *Base, & whole Superstructure of Religion.*” But if so, then indeed there needs much less Spirituality in Worship, and in the Hearts and Lives of Christians: Then there is no Need of Regeneration, no Need of Faith in the Blood of Christ, no Need of Humiliation and Soul-Compunction for indwelling Sin, &c. If *moral Virtue* is all that we have

to seek after, and if it were true (as he says) that “ our whole Happiness depends on our *personal* godd^d Behavi-
 “ *our*,” if this were all that God requires of us, then any Thing farther pretended to, might be esteemed *Superfluous* in the Service of God. But this is disclaimed by those that this Reproach is designed against (by the Author of it) who are careful to profess nothing as Matter of Faith, but what God has revealed, and nothing as Acts of Religion and the Worship of God, but what he has appointed in his Word.— But then, what shall be said of them that are unsound in the Faith, to that Degree, as to *teach for Doctrine* the vain Imaginations of their own dark and beclouded Reason ; and who act under the Influence perhaps of a corrupted Judgment and misguided Conscience ? For if Persons are unsound in the Faith, this will lead them into Corruptions and Innovations in Worship, and even to set aside the Scriptures as useless, which are the only true Rule and Standard of both.— The reproachful Charge, of a *senseless Superstition*, must then fall upon this Author himself.— I shall further here only mention the Observation some have made, That it is impossible for such as profess *Arminianism*, in it's full Latitude, to make a *Prayer* to God, consistent with their own *Principles*.— To this I may add, Such especially as have run the Length of this Author, in that unhappy and dangerous Scheme, if their Devotions are conformable to what are common among us, must needs, so far as herein they don't conform to their avow'd Principles, be guilty of *senseless Superstition*.

4. His last Article of Reflection or Charge, on Protestant Expositors, Preachers, and others, is, That by Means of their Sentiments in Divinity, “ the *pure and perfect Religion of JESUS* is in many Places turned into a *groundless Recumbancy*.” Now that this *groundless Recumbency*, as well as his other Instances of the bad Effects of the commonly received Protestant Doctrine, is unjustly applied, and rather concerns himself, is my Business to shew ; which when I have done, the whole Charge (I apprehend) will fall in full Weight on the misguided *Author*, as the natural Re-

sult from what he calls “ The pure and perfect Religion of JESUS,” viz. a refin’d System of *Morality*.—For any Man to place his *Hope of Happiness* on that which comes within the Reach of his own natural Ability, with the Aid of common Grace, as *personal good Behaviour* does, this is undoubtedly a *groundless Recumbency* ; it will prove as a *broken Staff* to him that leans on it, or as a *Foot out of Joint*. That Word of the Apostle to the *Colossians*, CHRIST in you the *Hope of Glory*, is sufficient to shew the falseness of the unregenerate Moralists’s Hope ; this is built on the *Sand* ; it has no sure Foundation for it’s Support, neither in Scripture nor right Reason. Nothing short of the *Righteousness which is of God*, wrought out by Christ, and made our’s by a gracious Imputation and a believing Acceptance, is a sufficient Ground of *Justification of Life*, or a proper Object of our *Confidence* and Reliance. It is but a vain *Confidence in the Flesh*, that depends on meer *moral Vertue*, and not on the *Righteousness of Faith*.

Thus, I think, it plainly appears, that the *idle Speculation*, the *mysterious Faith*, the *senseless Superstition*, and the *groundless Recumbency*, which this Author charges on others, do all lie on himself : And the whole serves to shew of what Make his Religion is, together with all others who profess *moral Vertue* to be the *Sum and Substance* of *Christianity*, the *Basis and whole Superstructure* of the Religion of JESUS ; and accordingly suppose *the whole of their Happiness to be suspended on their personal good Behaviour*.

Now, is it not beyond all Account strange, and indeed Matter of Amazement, that one under the Character of a *Minister* and but in his *Youth*, should give himself the Liberty thus to revile and vilify our Religion, so firmly founded on Scripture, and the many Thousand excellently pious Professors of it ? And to enforce his Reproaches, should espouse the Language of the most inveterate Haters of every Thing that is Religious, or that carries the Appearance of it ! What can *Infidels* say more to prejudice the Minds of People against the Doctrines of the Gospel, and those that profess them, many of whom have suffered

in the Defence of them ? What can easily be said more in Contempt of genuine Christianity, and the Essentials of our Religion ? It is rare to find any so open and bold as to ridicule our sacred Profession to the like Degree, among prophane Swearers, Drunkards, Sabbath-breakers, *Ishmaelish* Scoffers, and Despisers of all that is Good, or that tends to the Good of Souls !

If the Case were as he has represented it in his virulent Invective, what a *wretched* Condition must our *Fore-fathers* the Planters of *New-England* have been in, who lived and died in the Profession of that *Faith* and *Religion* which he so condemns and contemns ?

When we reflect on the Generations past, and take an impartial View of the many eminent *Reformers* Abroad, and of the many *Ministers of Jesus Christ* in this Land, who were faithful and unwearied in their Day, to build up his Kingdom, and establish Truth & Holiness in the Churches, not by *Tradition from the Fathers*, but from the unerring *Oracles of God*, and we trust, under the Direction and some good Degrees of the Influence of the *Holy Spirit* ; Whose *Doctrine* and *Example* of Life loudly testified for them ; I think this a sufficient Testimony for them in the Consciences of their Posterity, which should constrain us to acknowledge, *That God was with them of a very Truth.*— But alas ! what a gloomy and dismal Scene now appears on the Stage, *Tragical* indeed to behold ! Some, and this Author in particular, using their utmost Efforts to overthrow the very Foundation of these Churches, and turn their *Glory* into *Shame* ? What may we expect as the Issue of such Attempts ! unless God by his alwise, powerful, and gracious, over-ruling Providence interposes for our Help.— And I think it proper in this Day of Assault upon the Ark of God, to renew that Exclamation—*Who is on the Lord's Side ? Who ?* (with a Reduplication)—And may all that have the Interest of Christ at Heart, and that are jealous for his *Son-ship*, for the Glory of his Mediation, and Work of Redemption, unite with instant Prayer to God for the pouring down of his *Spirit* upon us, to establish Gospel-Truth

Truth and Holiness in the midst of us, and to defeat the Counsels of all the Troublers of our Israel.

I come now to consider,

2. The second *Inquiry* proposed, viz. Whether the true *Nature* and *Tendency* of this Author's *Discourse* is not fairly represented in the *Objections*, which he himself has raised and pretended to answer, in the Conclusion of it? And so, whether these *Objections* don't abide in full *Force* against it, notwithstanding all his laboured Solutions, and pretended Vindications of himself?

1. He says, *Pag.* 28.—“ I expect by this Time, some “ are ready to break forth,— *Ab ! all this directly tends “ to build People up in their own Righteousness.*”— Truly our Author appears a Man of some *Fore-sight*, and to have a Talent at Conjecture. For surely his Performance has very plainly *that*, and no other Aspect; and every well principle'd and experienc'd Christian would naturally be led to make such a Judgment upon it. *He that runs may read* this to be the Scope and Drift of it; from Beginning to End. And what is the Author's *Reply*? a meer *Evasion*. He beats the Air, and raises a Dust, to blind the Eyes of unwary Readers, and amuse the more Intelligent: While yet, if the Case be duly weighed, his Answer serves not to remove the Objection, but rather confirms and strengthens it. For he acknowledges, “ If by his *Discourse's* “ building People up in *their own Righteousness* be meant, “ that it recommends Hypocrisy and counterfeit Vertue, “ that it places Religion in any external Duties, separate “ from a corresponding good Temper within, or in short, “ in any *Righteousness* of our own contriving & not taught “ of God, or in any Thing but what the Bible makes the “ Substance of our present Duty and the Condition of our “ future Happiness; if this be the Force of the *Objection*,” He tells us, he “ has no other Answer to make, but to “ leave every one to judge for himself, how groundless it “ is.”— Now, if this be all the Answer he has to make, in Defence of his *Discourse*, truly I think it but a meer *Trifling* in a Matter of such Moment; and that the Charge

Charge in the *Objection* is no Ways removed, but fixed and corroborated by this his Reply. For what can tend more to recommend *Hypocrisy and counterfeit Vertue*, than to exhort Men to the Practice of *Righteousness*, without considering them as fallen Creatures, destitute of a vital Principle of Holiness, and without first laying the Foundation of *Repentance toward God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*? According to *Paul's* Example (*Act. 20. 21.*) who must be own'd a most consummate Preacher and Asserter of *Truth and Vertue*, even beyond our *Author* himself, notwithstanding all his specious Appearances in Behalf of *moral Vertue*: The Obligation whereto none of our Orthodox Expositors or Preachers, that I know of, deny; but own it to be of Necessity in the Christian Life. Yet to pretend, as our *Author* doth, that it is the *Basis* and whole *Superstructure* of Religion, is but a windy and vain Imagination. For certainly where there is no true *Contrition* of Heart for Sin, nor unfeigned *Faith* in the Blood of Christ, and consequently no *Love* in Sincerity towards God or Man, how can these at best be any Thing better than *unregenerate Morality*, or (in our *Author's* Phrase) *Counterfeit Vertue*? And while Men attend the *Externals* of divine Worship, how can there possibly be a *corresponding good Temper within*, without humble *Faith* in the *Mediator*, teaching them to do all in *His Name*, with intire Dependance on his *Righteousness and Strength*? But how can there be this *Faith* in *Christ*, where Men only depend on their *moral Agency* under the Aids of meer common Grace, and trust to *their own Righteousness* for Acceptance with God? Alas, what spiritual *Pride and Vanity* is it in any, to imagine that by their own Sufficiency they are able to do all required of them, both toward God and toward their fellow Creatures, and to trust in their *personal good Behaviour*, to recommend them to the divine Mercy! — Yet after all, what can we conceive of this *Author's corresponding good Temper within*, but that it means somewhat carrying a Correspondence with (or perhaps the very same Thing with) what others depend much on, under the Name of

of *The Light within*, and *moral Honesty*, even so as to renounce *Scripture-Revelation*, especially in the *Letter* of it, as of a *killing* and *destructive Quality*?—And this looks the more likely, as such are *Enemies* to the *Doctrine of Original Sin*, and of *imputed Righteousness*, and disown even *Christ's Satisfaction or Atonement*: And in this Regard shew a *Temper within* corresponding with that shewn in our *Author's Discourse*.

In the Conclusion of his Answer to the present *Objection*, he do's but still confirm it, while he owns “his *Rejoycing in the least Tendency* his Discourse has, to *build People up in their own Righteousness*, if by this be designed, it is “any Ways calculated to encourage *personal Goodness*, and “promote the *Practice of moral and Christian Vertue in the World*.” Which is to be understood, according to the Run of his whole Performance, as intending only the Practice of the Duties of *Morality*, without justifying *Faith* and a *regenerating Change* on the Heart: and how dangerous it is to rest in this, every one may easily judge.

We find him indeed confessing “his *greatest Concern*, upon a Review of his Discourse, That *so good a Design* is “*so poorly served*.”—For this, I think truly he had just Reason, since it so evidently disowns those peculiar *Doctrines* of the Gospel, which under the Influence of the Spirit of Grace, have the most powerful Efficacy to promote genuine *Christian Vertue*; and since it rather explodes, than recommends that *Faith* in CHRIST, which is the grand Principle of true and acceptable Obedience. For, where he once speaks of “*Reliance on the Merit & Intercession of Christ*,” 'tis not in Language of Recommendation, but rather with Marks of *Depreciation*, and a visible Air of Contempt.

2. Another *Objection* which he mentions and pretends to Answer (Pag. 29.) is this. — “*Not one Word of Christ, nor the least Savour of true Gospel Soul-saving Preaching in all this Discourse*.”—Upon which I must observe, 'tis lamentable, that one who sustains the Character of a Minister of *Christ*; and a Preacher of the Gospel, and pretends to

to regard the *saving of Souls*, shou'd allow himself, in stating this *Objection*, to use such an Air of *Levity & Banter*, as is apparent here.

It may be readily granted, as to the first Part of the *Objection*, he might have done himself the Justice, to reply, that he had spoken more than *one Word* of *Christ*, in his Discourse; that he had *named* him, and that he had talked of him: But then it's proper to inquire, after what *Manner* and to what *Purpose* he has done this? To which it can only be answered, that he has *named* him indeed, but under a comparatively diminutive Character, as the great *Preacher* of Righteousness, who came to set up the *Christian Scheme* in the World, and by his Doctrine and Example to propagate Truth and Vertue. — But then not a single Word of *CHRIST*, as the great *High-Priest* of our Profession; not one Word of *CHRIST*, as the *Propitiation* for our Sins; not a Word of *CHRIST*, as the *Lord* but *Righteousness*; not a Word of *CHRIST*, as having *purchased his Church with his own Blood*; not a Word of the *Righteousness which is of God by Faith in CHRIST*; and in Effect, nothing of the main Contents of the *Gospel of Peace*, as such. Nor can I discern the least Savour of true *Evangelical Preaching* in all this Discourse of his.

But let us attend our *Author's* Answer to this *Objection*. “The Difficulty (he thinks) will intirely vanish, when we come to adjust our Notions of the Thing.” Which he attempts mainly in the Language and under the Countenance of one whom he calls “*a late elegant Writer*”; who tells us, “To *preach CHRIST* is universally acknowledged to be the Duty of every *Christian Minister*.” — But what's the Ground of this Limitation? Why is the *Christian Minister* singled out? For if *Morality* be the *Sum & Substance* of Christianity (as we have all along heard) and if to *preach Christ* means to preach *moral Vertue* (as likewise we have heard) surely then the Duty extends to the *Jewish Minister*, to the *Mahometan*, yea and to the *Pagan*, — as well as the *Christian Minister*. — But this Writer tells us, first, what is *not* meant by *preaching CHRIST*. “It is not (says he),

“ he) to use *his Name* as a *Charm*, to work up our Hearers
 “ to a warm *Pitch* of *Enthusiasm* ; without any Founda-
 “ tion in *Reason* to support it.” Well, by this, I suppose,
 we may learn what is one of those “ *Rabble-Charming*
Sounds” our Author speaks of (*Pag.* 23.) as “ converting
 some into such *fiery Bigots*, that they are ready to die in
 the Defence of *Stupidity* and *Nonsense*.” Perhaps he looks
 upon that Sermon as truly deserving no better Character
 than this, where the *Name* of CHRIST is frequently repeat-
 ed, even tho’ the Subject naturally leads to it, as being
 some Doctrine or Duty relating to CHRIST immediately.
 But verily, to them which believe, CHRIST is precious, and
 his Name is as Oymment poured forth. The Apostle Paul
 has set us an Example, who appears far from being shy of
 mentioning the Name of CHRIST ; nay, he rather seems to
 delight in often repeating it ; inso much that he names the
 Name of CHRIST on some Occasions, no less than ten Times
 in just so many Verses (*I Cor.* 1.) and no less than seventeen
 or eighteen Times in one Chapter, as in *Phil.* 1. Where, by
 the Way, the Apostle expressly speaks of preaching CHRIST,
 v. 15, 16, 18. — And if our Author, or the Writer he so
 highly commends and takes Sanctuary under, can reconcile
 what the inspired Writer says there, about preaching CHRIST,
 with their Notion of it’s being to preach moral Vertue, the
 Controversy perhaps may soon be ended : but ’till then,
 let this Writer be who he will, I think it my Duty, not to
 forego a Certainty for an Uncertainty, and therefore
 choose rather to take my Measures from, and submit my
 Judgment to the Sentiments of this inspired Writer, Paul,
 than to our Author’s elegant Writer, or any others whose
Faith and *Hope* reach no farther than his seems to do, but
 terminate in *Morality*. It is the undoubted Duty of those
 who are *Embassadors* for CHRIST, to make frequent men-
 tion of *his Name*, both in their Sermons and Prayers ;
 especially as it is expressly required of us, that whatever
 we do in Word or Deed, we should do all in the Name of the
 Lord Jesus, giving Thanks to God and the Father by him.
Col. 3. 17. — For Ministers to omit naming the Name of
 CHRIST in their Discourses, under a Pretext of Caution, lest
 they

they should “*Charm their Hearers, and work them up to a warm Pitch of Enthusiasm,*” appears to me a senseless Superstition indeed, of human and modern Invention; having no Foundation in Scripture-Precept or Example, nor countenanced by the primitive Christian Preachers.—Certainly as our Lord Jesus observes, *Out of the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh*; and accordingly, I cannot but think, where Ministers have received the Love of the Truth, and have CHRIST much upon their Hearts, he will be much in their Mouths, nor will they scruple the explicit mentioning of his Name frequently in their Praying & Preaching; tho’ in this, as in all other Cases, *Wisdom is profitable to direct*. Nor wou’d I be understood to lay so much Stress on the meer naming of CHRIST; but rather on the Purposes for which we name him, and the Representations we make of his Person and Character, Offices and Benefits, Doctrine and Religion.—I shall not spend more Time at present, nor trouble my Reader any further with this elegant Writer’s Sentiments, (on which our Author, it seems, places such a mighty Dependance,) as he has delivered himself in such ambiguous Terms, and so exceptionably in general. Only I will take some Notice of his Manner of Expression, when he tells us positively his own Sense of what it is to preach CHRIST. It is, says he, “to represent him as a Law-giver, as well as a Saviour, as a Preacher of Righteousness, as one who hath given us a most noble & compleat System of Morality, enforced by the most substantial & worthy Motives.” — To what End, can we conceive, do’s our Author introduce this his elegant Writer, as he styles him? The Author is here pretending to vindicate his own Discourse, and obviate an Objection he supposes made against it: but what do’s this Quotation avail to his Purpose? Unless he might imagine (as probably he did) that this elegant Writer’s Authority wou’d bear an equal Sway on the Judgment of others, as it did upon his own. Whereas truly all the Service it has done him, that I can find, is only to confirm the Objection; and prove, that his Writer and Himself together are little better than Pelagian Moralists, as there is nothing said of Faith in the Blood of Christ, nothing

nothing of the *Righteousness which is of God by Faith*, nor of the other peculiar Doctrines of *Christianity*; only as they are spoken of mostly in a Way of *Banter & Contempt*. — As for “the most substantial and worthy *Motives*,” this elegant Writer speaks of, these doubtless in his Opinion are those taken from the intrinsic Beauty and Excellency of *Vertue*, it's Advantages to *Society*, it's recommending us to God's Mercy, intitling us to Happiness, &c. according to the Strain of our *Author*. But I think, the *Vertue* acquired only by such *Motives* as these, however commendable it may appear in the Eyes of Men, yet in the Sight of the Heart-searching God will never stand approved for true *Christian Vertue*. While Men are destitute of the *Faith of God's Elect*, and without a vital *Principle of Grace* in the Heart, which is absolutely needful to govern their moral Actions, and lead them to the chief and ultimate End, they will, at best, but make a fair *Shew in the Flesh*, and will finally be found but as a *sounding Brass, or a tinkling Cymbal*.

But possibly our *Author* might perceive himself under a Necessity here to correct his elegant Writer, on a review of the Sentiments he had offered; and finding that they no Way served his Purpose, so as to remove the *Objection*, therefore he hath interpolated his Quotation, by inserting the following *Parenthesis*, containing perhaps the best Sentence in all his Discourse, if it had been introduced in it's proper Time and Place. — He thus breaks in upon his *Writer*, and after the Word *Motives*, says “(among which I may venture to mention as one of the most powerful, The Certainty of Forgiveness of Sins, and final Acceptance with the Father, through the Merits of the Son, upon the Condition of Faith, Repentance and Good-living.)” — But it looks very strange, that our *Author*, who had been all along in his Discourse pleading up moral *Vertue*, as the *Basis and whole Superstructure of Religion*, and as that on which our whole Happiness is suspended, &c. should now at last bring in *Faith and Repentance*, and crowd them in thus, out of Place; where his sole Business was, if he knew it, to vindicate his Performance against the *Objection*, he

had raised ; without doing which, doubtless he was well aware, it wou'd unavoidably fall under the just Censure of every judicious & cautious Reader. But it's odd in him now, instead of *defending* his Discourse, to fall to *mending* of it, by diverting to what seems to carry with it something of an *Evangelical Aspect*. Yet it in no Wise answers his pretended Purpose : the *Objection* stands in it's full Form and Force against him. And it is yet farther evident, that the *Author* has no great Regard to *Faith* and *Repentance* : for, as we find in the Close of all, he sums up the Whole or Main of our Saviour's Preaching in *moral Vertue*. Our Author's Words are, " To preach up chiefly what CHRIST
 " himself laid the *chiefest Stress* upon (and whether this was
 " not *moral Vertue*, let every one judge from his Discourses)
 " must certainly, in the Opinion of all sober Men, be called
 " truly and properly, and in the best Sense *preaching of*
 " CHRIST."—The Ambiguity of Expression here may be design'd, as in some other Parts of this *Author's* Performance, for an Evasion. However, it shews us the little Regard he has for *Faith* and *Repentance*, or indeed for the *Honour* of CHRIST, that he has so soon lost the Impression of these *evangelical* Words, and instantly returns again to his beloved *Morality* : and he visibly puts Contempt on CHRIST, by representing him as laying the *chiefest Stress* on *moral Vertue*, in his Preaching. Which I apprehend may be easily disproved. It is granted, Christ did preach up *moral Vertue*, rightly understood. As he *came not to destroy, but to fulfill the Law*, so he saw fit to explain and inculcate it on his Hearers : he saw meet, for the detection of Hypocrites, and awakening of Sinners, as well as for the Direction of his Disciples moral Conduct, to preach the *Law*, or lay before them " the eternal Rules of Morality." Yet notwithstanding, it is Fact, that he began, continued and ended his Ministry with preaching the *Gospel*, and inculcating chiefly the Doctrines of *Faith* and *Repentance*. Christ began his publick Ministry on Earth with preaching up *Faith* and *Repentance*. See *Mar. i. 15*.— The great and precious *Promises* uttered by Christ, were made to them that *repent* and *believe on his Name*.— The *mira-
 culous*

culous Cures Christ wrought, are not ascribed to Men's moral Vertue, but to their Faith. It was a Word often used by Christ, *Thy FAITH hath saved thee* : Or, *Thy FAITH hath made thee Whole*.— These wonderful Works were emblematical of the Wonders of recovering and renewing Grace wrought on the Souls of Men ; brought about by Faith & Repentance instrumentally, as the Means in Christ's Hand to effect the spiritual Cure, without which there can be no Hope of Salvation. By Grace ye are saved thro' Faith, this is the practical Language of Christ's Miracles. Christ preached Faith, when he said, *Ye believe in God, Believe also in me*. Joh. 14. 1.— The Parables of Christ were evidently calculated chiefly to recommend Faith : And if Christ in his Discourses laid the chief Stress on moral Vertue, there must then be a wide Difference of Meaning between his Discourses and his Parables ; which it would be Profanity to imagine.— Christ also finished his personal Ministry with preaching Faith and Repentance. (Mar. 16. 16. & Luk. 24. 46, 47.) It may be added, he directed his Apostles, and in them all his Ministers in Succession for ever, to preach up Faith & Repentance ; tho' not exclusively of good Works, as their proper Fruits, and the Evidences of their Sincerity. — It is strange therefore, with what Face this Author (or his elegant Writer) could assert, or so much as insinuate, that CHRIST laid the chief Stress on moral Vertue ! — How inconsistent is this Hypothesis with Revelation, with Reason, and even with common Sense ! Therefore to be detested by every one, that so much as pretends to Religion, or to found their Belief on the Doctrine of CHRIST in the Gospel.— Certainly the Apostles understood the Mind of CHRIST in this Case, better than our Author, or the Writer he so much glories in : And if we trace the sacred Records of their Preaching, together with their Epistles, we shall find these Holy Men, as they were moved by the holy Ghost, preaching chiefly Faith and Repentance, and not laying Stress on moral Vertue, otherwise than as resulting from these evangelical Principles.

I perceive, this Gentleman has the Satisfaction to think, that all sober Men must certainly approve of his Sentiments delivered

delivered in his Discourse : and possibly he is the more strengthen'd in his erroneous and unscriptural Way of Writing, by the Quotation he produces from that *elegant Writer* he speaks of. But I must assure him, I *have not so learned* CHRIST, as to treat his *Person, Name, Offices, Miracles, and Preaching*, with such daring Marks of Contempt, or to detract from CHRIST the Glory of his *Mission, Negotiations, and Instructions*, when here in the World.

Remarkable is the Confidence, with which our Author expresses his Sentiments, concerning “ what must certainly be called truly and properly, and in the best Sense *“ Preaching of CHRIST,*” viz. the preaching up *moral Vertue* ; & this to be understood, with a common Neglect of *Faith in Christ, and the Righteousness* which is of Faith. He doubtless intended this Observation as a Point of *Doctrine*, enforced by his *own* and his *elegant Writer's* Authority. He must mean it, I think, as an *Instruction* to *others*, as well as a Vindication of his Discourse. If only to take off the *Objection* laid against this, was his Design, he has strangely mis'd his Aim : For he has strongly confirmed it, by telling us, That preaching up *moral Vertue*, is *truly and properly and in the best Sense preaching CHRIST*.—But probably he design'd this for a standing *Rule*, to direct Ministers how to *preach* CHRIST, *in the properest and best Manner* : And he might intend his Discourse to be a *Model* or *Pattern* for them to Copy after.—However, as I trust, there are few of the Ministers in these *New-England Churches*, led away from the Truth, to that Degree, as to entertain their Hearers with such *idle Speculations*, and jejune Harangues on Morality : So I would hope, none of the *Candidates* for the Pulpit will receive his Arbitrary Dictates in his present Discourse. The *moral Vertue* our Author has discoursed of, is not that *true Holiness*, which CHRIST commends to us in the Gospel : but rather is like the *Righteousness of the unbelieving Scribes and Pharisees*, on which our Lord did manifestly cast Contempt, and therefore could not *lay the chiefest Stress* upon it.—Paul testified both to the *Jews and Greeks*, *Repentance toward God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*. It was these

these Graces that *Paul* chiefly preach'd up, to which he was inspir'd; and *moral Vertue*, only as the Fruit and Evidence of those Graces. — Consistent with this, he *determined not to know any Thing, save Jesus Christ and him crucified.*

Upon the whole, whether our *Author* will look upon me among the Number of *sober Men* or not, I cannot but bear my publick Testimony against this unjustifiable *Discourse* of his, which I have been remarking upon. And I can truly say, it is with much Grief of Mind, and as Matter of deep Humiliation of Soul in the Sight of God, that I find in this *Author* (and the Gentleman, whose *Narrative* I have taken some Notice of before; with some others that have lately been set up in the *Ministry*) corrupt Sentiments in Religion, and such Notions about Gospel-Doctrines, as must, I think, appear to the generality of *sober Men* to be of a really *bad* and *dangerous* Tendency, and of a *Latitudinarian* and *unscriptural* Aspect, tending to *subvert the Gospel of the Grace of God*; to *destroy the Faith*, once delivered to the Saints, and generally professed by Protestants, in these and other Parts of the reformed World; to pluck up the true *Basis*, and to pull down the *whole Superstructure of the Religion of Jesus*; to substitute Men's *moral Attainments* in the Room of the *Righteousness of God, by Faith in Jesus Christ.* — Indeed this *Discourse* I have taken thus under Consideration, seems calculated to suit the false Relish of *Deists* and *Libertines*, rather than to edify or gratify any truly *sober* sincere Christian. And as one that is not ashamed of the *Gospel of Christ*, I can't but own my self greatly ashamed and grieved, that any who bear the Character of *sober Men*, and have been trained up in the Principles of our holy Religion, by their being catechised and other Ways instructed therein, shou'd notwithstanding be so ignorant, as not to see, or so prejudiced and partial, as not to confess, the *Absurdity* and the *blasphemous* Tendency of such a *Discourse*, as this of our *Author* appears in my Eyes manifestly to be.

Accordingly my serious and hearty Wish for this *Author*, and the Abbettors of his Performances (this & others offered to publick View) is, That *God may give them Repentance*

penitance, to the acknowledgment of the Truth: even that Truth in Doctrine and Practice I am contending for, and labouring to defend, which is founded on the Mind of God revealed in the Scriptures of Truth; therefore not dependent on human Reasonings, much less on the crafty Insinuations of such as lie in wait to deceive; whose Delations are always to be guarded against, whether we Eye them in their Intention, or their direct Tendency, and necessary Consequences.--- And as my sincere Aims have been and are, I trust, to plead for the Truth as it is in Jesus, and only testify against Error, I shall stand open to Light from any, who may give me a clearer Understanding in those Things of which I have treated, and produce better Arguments, supported by the Scripture. But I shall slight the Scoffs and Invectives of those whose main Talent and Genius leads them mostly to banter and ridicule Things sacred and spiritual, and whose Endeavours are to overthrow the pure Religion of Jesus, as taught and professed in these Churches of our Lord Jesus Christ, by corrupt Tenets, and innovated Methods of Conduct, destructive of our Holy Profession and most valuable Privileges, and beyond Expression wounding to the Souls of the rising Generation.--- And here I may subjoin, not unfitly or unseasonably, what the Apostle Paul writes to the Church of Christ in Thessalonica, (2 Epist. 3. 6, 14.) *Now we command you, Brethren, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw your selves from every Brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the Tradition ye received of us.--- And if any Man obey not our Word by this Epistle, note that Man, and have no Company with him, that he may be ashamed.*----- The Application I leave.

I shall conclude this Essay with a remarkable Passage, not foreign to the Purpose of these Remarks, out of the Reverend and famous Mr. SHEPARD's *Select Cases*; which in the Contents is stiled, "A sound Confutation of that heretical *Arminian* Tenet, That the Strength of Grace is to be got rather by Argumentation, than inward Communication and Influence arising from Union with Christ."--- The Passage is this; "As the old sinful Nature is communicated from Adam the first unto us, without any Argumentation: So the new Nature, which is the Seed, Foundation, and Plot of all Grace, is diffused into us by the second Adam, when we are united to him, without Argumentation; it is only by Divine Operation."--- And he closes with this short, but comprehensive Prayer, "The Lord leave not me, nor any Friend I have, to a naked *Arminian* Illumination and Perswasion,"--- AMEN.

F I N I S.

The Author



